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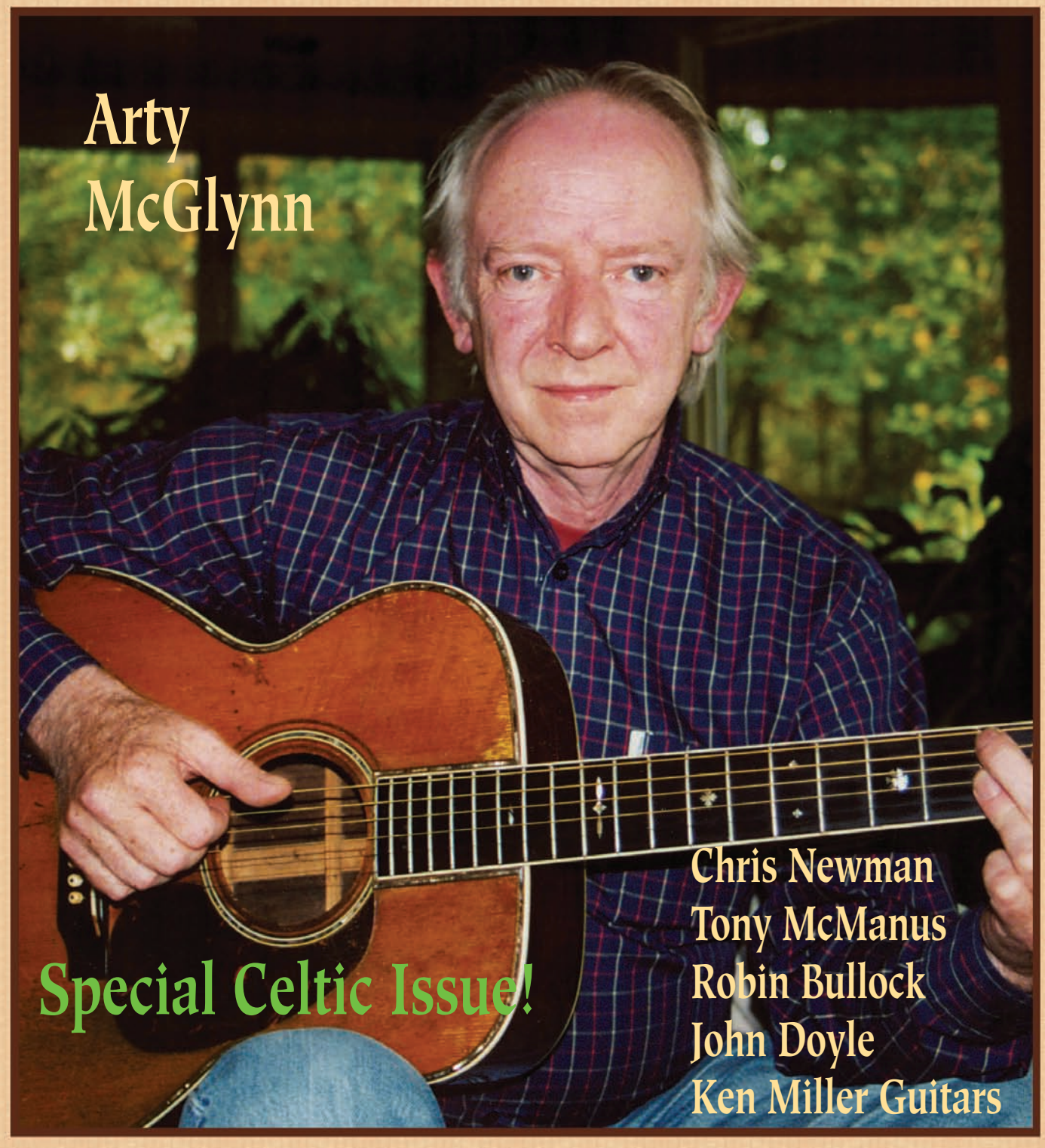
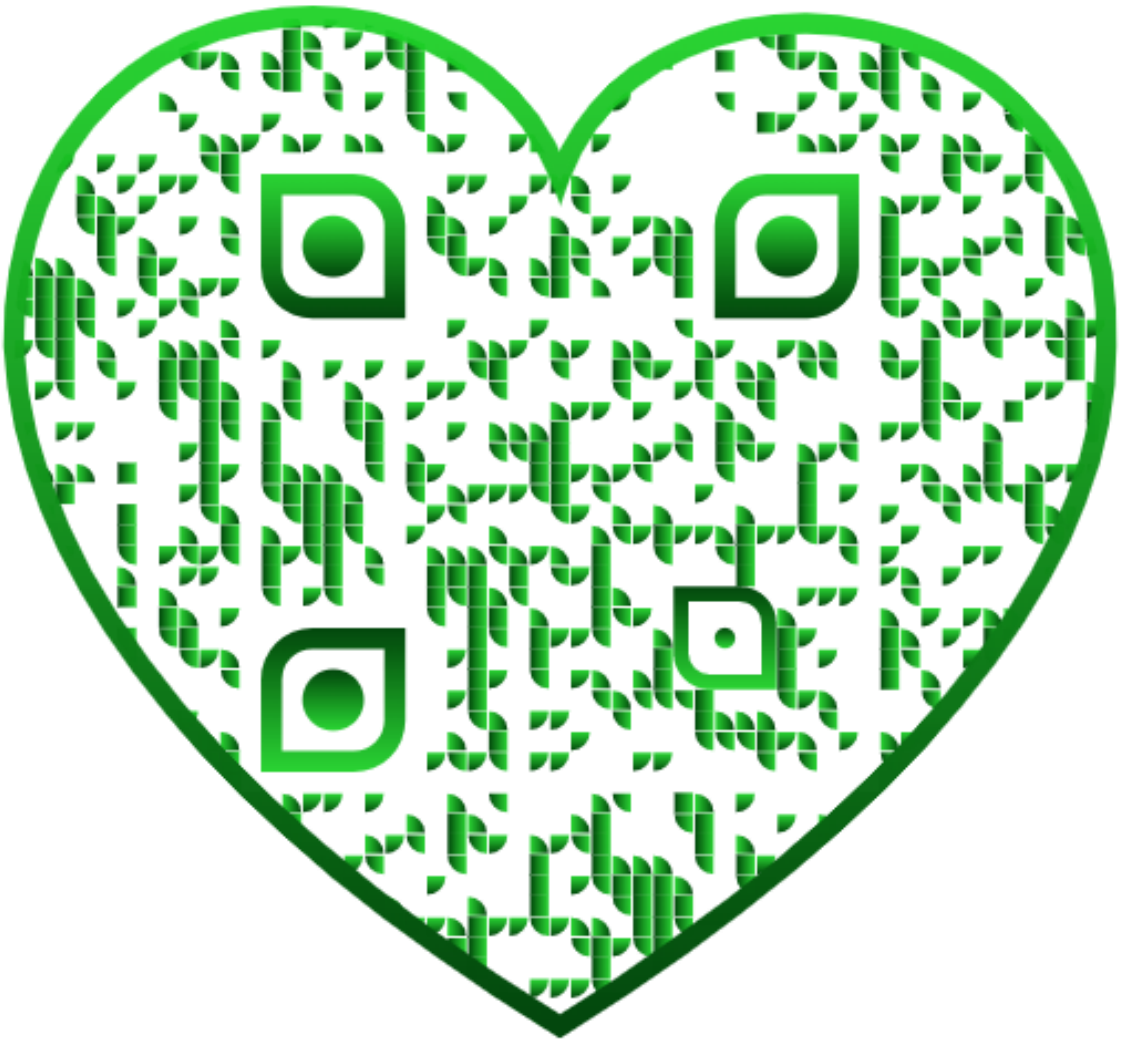
Flatpicking Guitar Magazine

Volume 8, Number 3 March/April 2004





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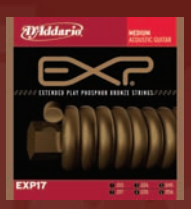

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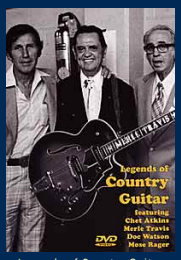

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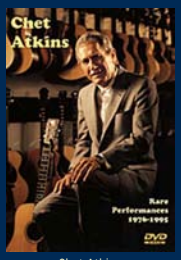

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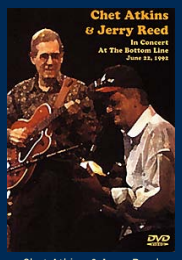

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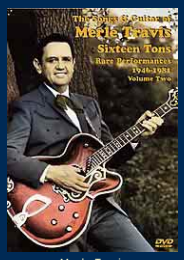

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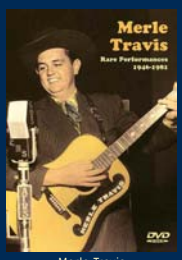

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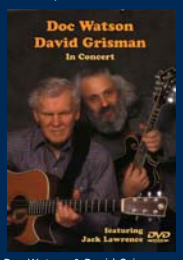

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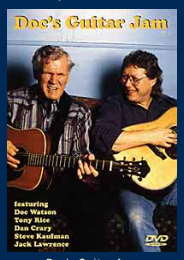

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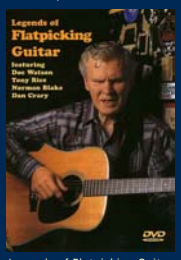

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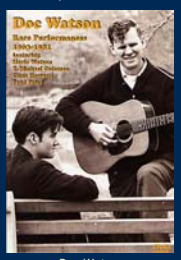

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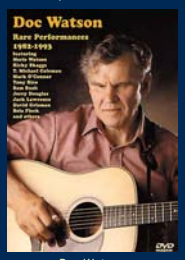

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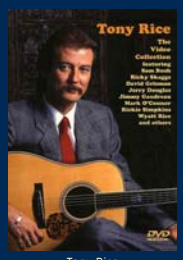

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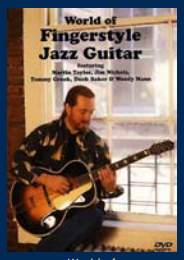

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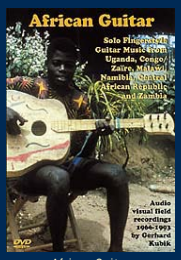

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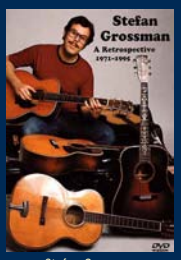

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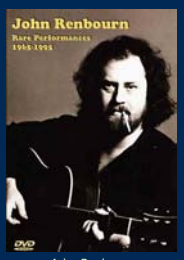

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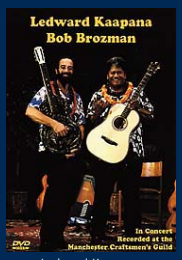

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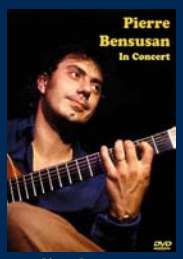

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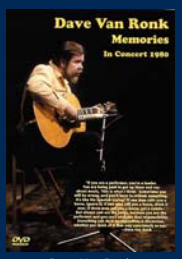

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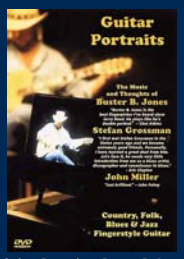

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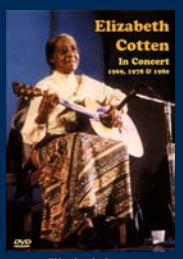

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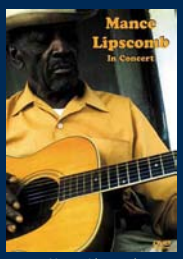

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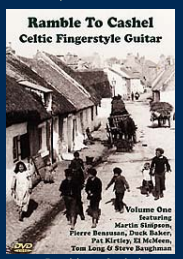

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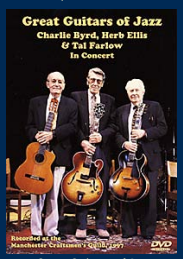

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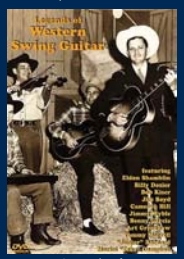

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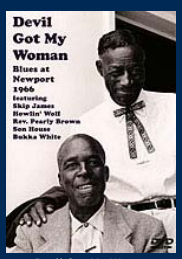

Devil Got My Woman
Blues at Newport 1966
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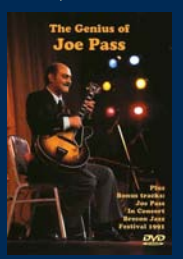

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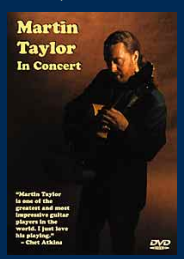

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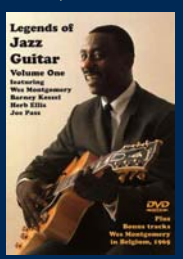

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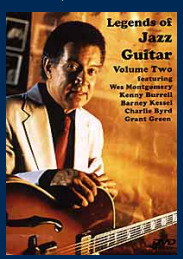

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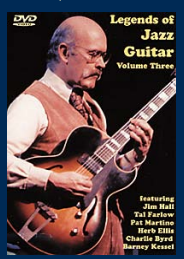

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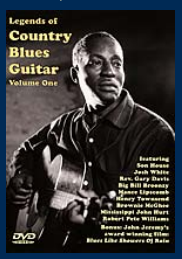

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How to Duplicate & Promote an Acoustic CD Release

1. **Send your music to radio.** No matter how you define your goals, you need to get your music to folk radio. One excellent way to do this is through a **radio-oriented sampler CD program**, such as the OASISACOUSTIC™ sampler CDs, which get the music of Oasis clients to hundreds of key radio stations throughout the U.S.

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3. **Think "retail-friendly" when packaging your CD.** Your CD needs to look as good as it sounds. While jewel-box packaging is still very popular, as an alternative you may want to consider eye-catching **cardboard substitutes for the jewel box.** such as the patented **Oasis Jewel-Free™ Box**.

4. **Work with a reputable duplication company:**

• **Ask for references.** Who are the company's clients? Do they include artists and labels you respect? (Oasis is proud of our work, for example, with Trout Fishing in America, David Wilcox, Trapezoid, Chris Smither, Brooks Williams, Steven King, Salamander Crossing...)

• **Do they understand your music and your market?** If you're going to Kerrville for the first time, do they understand what this means? If your guitar sounds too tinny, do they know how to fix it? Nerissa Nields (The Nields) says "We love dealing with a company that knows and cares who we are. Oasis is fantastic; they manufactured our CDs in time to make sure we had them for our CD release at the Iron Horse. And the quality is superb."

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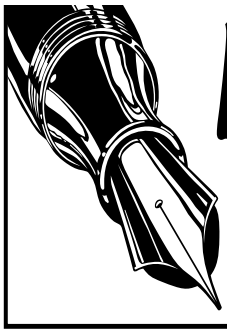

EDITOR'S PAGE

The Celtic Guitar Issue

Welcome to this special issue which explores Celtic guitar. In this issue we feature Arty McGlynn from Ireland, Tony McManus from Scotland, Chris Newman from England, and Robin Bullock, the American Celtic guitar specialist. Those of you who have attended Steve Kaufman's camp are familiar with Tony, Chris, and Robin as they have all been instructors at the camp in recent years. If you are not familiar with Arty McGlynn, I am proud to introduce him to you in this issue. He is the guy who all of these other players look up to as "the man" when it comes to playing Irish music on the guitar and thus well deserving of the cover of this special issue.

Since many of the bluegrass songs and fiddle tunes that we flatpickers love to play can be traced back to Irish, Scottish, or English roots, I thought it would be interesting to provide readers with an issue which focused on music from these countries and traditions. The majority of our regular columnists jumped on the Celtic bandwagon and were happy to provide us with some great tunes from they Celtic traditions that they enjoy playing. I hope you enjoy *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine's* trip across the Atlantic!

I like to provide readers with at least one specialty issue a year. Last year was the bluegrass rhythm issue with Jimmy Martin, the year before was the Gypsy jazz issue with Django Rienhardt, and now this year, the Celtic guitar issue. If you are strictly a bluegrass, or fiddle tune player, I hope that taking a focused look at some of the techniques that are employed on the acoustic guitar by players in other musical genres will help expand your abilities and open your mind to new ideas. If you have never tried ornamenting with triplets or playing in 6/8 time, you'll have plenty of opportunities in this issue. Give it a try! And good luck!

Flatpicking 2003

We have finally put together our *Flatpicking 2003* sampler. I'm sorry that it has taken several extra months to get this project completed. For those of you who have been calling and asking about it, thanks for your patience. I think that this year's flatpicking sampler is one of the best we have ever produced and I hope that you will all enjoy it. It is packed with great guitar players and great tunes. Check it out!

BluegrassDVD.com

Over the years we have had requests from numerous subscribers for our mercantile to expand and sell items that may be of interest to mandolin players, banjo players, bass players, etc. With all of the other projects we have planned, we have not had the time or energy to expand the mercantile beyond the guitar world. However, I would like everyone to know about a new website that is carrying all of the instrument instruction, concert performances, and documentaries pertaining to bluegrass instruments and bluegrass music in the DVD format. The new site is being run by our friend and fellow flatpicker Jim Quarles of Free Union, Virginia. In addition to selling DVDs the site will also feature short downloadable footage of various bluegrass professionals teaching you their signature techniques. This month flatpickers can check out footage of Brad Davis teaching his double-down-up technique. You've heard him talk about it, now see him do it up close. You can check out www.bluegrassdvd.com.

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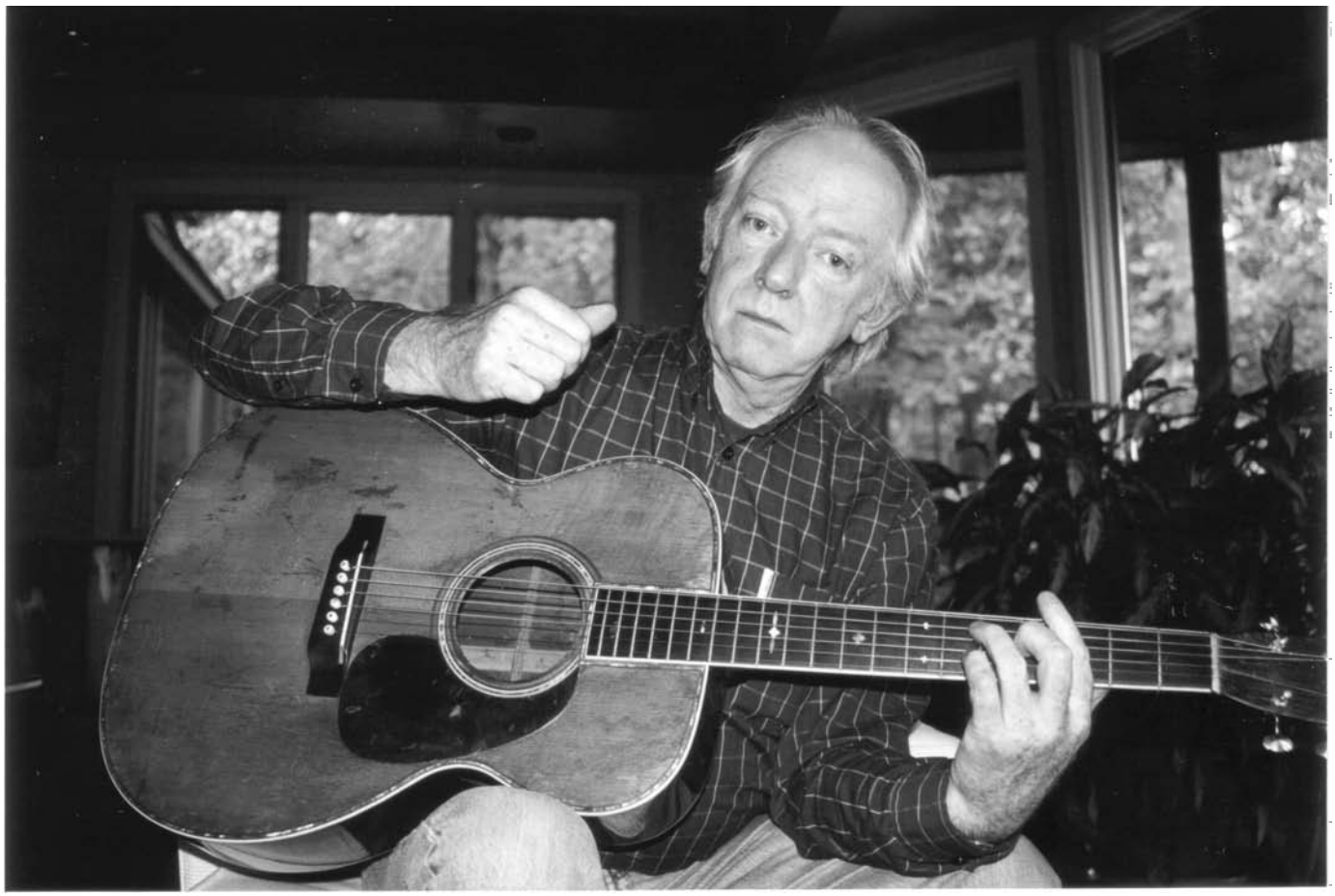
Arty McGlynn



Arty McGlynn is to flatpicking traditional Irish music what Doc Watson is to flatpicking American fiddle tunes. Like Doc, Arty took an instrument that was primarily used in an accompaniment role and gave it a lead voice. He first did this in a recorded form on his 1979 release *McGlynn's Fancy: Arty McGlynn Plays Traditional Irish Music on the Guitar*. The recording was immediately hailed as a "classic in the traditional music world" and as a result Arty became "the most sought after musician in Ireland." And, like Doc, Arty continues to create and innovate while remaining true to tradition. Fintan Vallely of the *Irish Times* recently stated, "Almost 20 years since he first played this venue (Belfast's Harp Folk Club), McGlynn's picking of tunes was hugely impressive, a terrific demonstration, not only of the impact this player has made to the use of guitar in traditional music, but of the unfazed consistency of his innovation."

Arty McGlynn has played and recorded with some of Ireland's most famous individual artists and bands, including Christy Moore, Paul Brady, Donal Lunny, Liam O'Flynn, Planxty, Patrick Street, De Dannon, the Chieftains, and the Van Morrison Band, to name a few. He has been—and remains—in high demand as a performer, recording artist, and producer. He is also a "guitar player's guitar player" on the Irish music scene. In preparation for this special Celtic guitar issue of *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* I approached a number of well-known guitarists from England, Ireland, and Scotland and asked who we should feature on the cover of this special issue. In every case the answer was the same: "Arty McGlynn."

Written by Dan Miller

Although Arty's name is mostly associated with traditional Irish music, his early professional career took him away from the traditional music that he encountered and learned from his family while growing up in Omagh, County Tyrone, Ireland. Arty said, "There was always music in the house—my mother played fiddles, my brothers and father played accordions. I started playing accordion when I was about five and played until I was eleven. There was always a banjo in the house and I used to play around on that as well. Then my mother bought me an electric guitar in 1956. That was the explosion of rock and roll and the whole thing. The skiffle thing was all happening."

Recalling his early years playing accordion with his family, Arty said that the best lesson he learned about music

came from his father who said, "You are losing time! It doesn't matter if you miss some notes, don't lose time. Even if you have to skip over a few notes, make sure your time ends up the same when you are finished." Arty said, "My father wasn't really a teacher. I learned more from my mother, who was a fiddle player. But that was a very good lesson that he taught me."

When Arty got his first guitar, at about the age of 12, there was only one other guy in town that he knew who played the guitar. He says, "He was about five years older than me, but he was a very patient type of guy. He could figure stuff out. He could read music. He knew his chords. I used to go to his house and he opened up a lot of doors for me very easily that I probably wouldn't have had the discipline to do myself at that time. I learned a lot from him and I also studied theory with a sax player from Omagh named James O'Neill. He was a fine jazz musician." At a fairly young age Arty was delving into the playing of jazz greats like Wes Montgomery and Barney Kessel, which he was led to through his earlier interest in Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Gene Vincent.

Arty explained that during the mid-to-late fifties most of the dance bands in Ireland were coming out of the swing era. When he was fifteen he joined a dance band called the Melody Boys and began playing professionally. He says, "It was a great experience for me because apart from doing the rock and roll stuff at home that I was learning off of records, I had to read charts and play swing chords with the band. It was good experience for a kid. I learned my theory from those bands, but I was always into playing rock and roll."

Although he stopped playing Irish music in about 1955, Arty says, "I was still always aware of it because it was always in my house. During that time I sort of had a love/hate relationship with Irish music. Where I went to school there were dancing and music competitions that were very strict and conservative. I fought against all of that and I associated Irish music with all that for a long time. I like the music; I just didn't like the stuff that went along with it."

Arty also explained that during that era Irish music was not arranged in parts, everyone that played in the band played the melody at the same time while someone "banged away on chords on the piano." Arty said, "It wasn't very attractive." He said that it wasn't until Sean O'Riada, of University College, Cork, began to arrange traditional Irish music (late 50s through the 1960s) with defined parts that the music began to change. In *Celtic Music: A Complete Guide,* author June Skinner Sawyers explains that prior to O'Riada's ensemble Ceoltoiri Chualann, "traditional music was considered a solo art, except for the popular ceilidh dance bands. Using traditional instruments but with classical-style arrangements, the ensemble incorporated elements of harmony and improvisation—alien concepts in Irish traditional music."

Paddy Moloney, of O'Riada's ensemble, later went on to form the Chieftains, the most famous traditional Irish band. Another traditional band that became very popular in the early seventies was Planxty. Arty said, "Planxty started around 1969 or 1970. That was attractive, the stuff that Donal and Andy [bouzouki player Donal Lunny and mandolin player Andy Irvine] were doing. I sort of cocked my ear to that again because they were doing nice arrangements on bouzouki and mandolins and it was a different slant on Irish music. In the meantime I'd been playing from 1959 in rock bands and show bands five-to-six nights a week."

Arty said that "out of boredom" in about 1970 he started taking the acoustic guitar out on the road with him on the show band bus and playing tunes to pass the time. He said, "I wanted to get out of that situation. A show band is a very boring place to be after the initial excitement. I decided in the early 70s

Arty McGlynn with his wife, and musical partner, fiddler Nolliag Casey

Arty and Nollaig perform at the Prism in Charlottesville, VA in October 2003

that I would do session work in Belfast and thought that if I could get the session work built up a bit, I could get off the road."

In about 1977 singer-songwriter Paul Brady, of the Johnstons (late 60s) and Planxty (mid-70s), had come back to Ireland and asked Arty to join his band in 1979. Arty played on Brady's rock debut album *Hard Station* which was released in 1981. Arty said, "During the time I was doing session work I would lay down a little track after a session. That finally came out as an album in 1979 as *McGlynn's Fancy*."

Although the album was heralded as a ground breaking recording due to Arty's lead guitar work on traditional Irish tunes, Arty said, "I was amazed at the attention it got because I did not circulate on the Irish circuit at all when I was in show bands. You play six nights a week, so you don't meet anybody when you are going out like that. So when I made the record, I never thought that it would see the light of day. It was just a hobby, really. But it started getting played on radio."

When asked about the role of the guitar in Irish music prior to that time, Arty said, "Part of the thing that put me off about Irish music was that it was very conservative back then. There was no time for guitars or bouzoukis. They were purists, you know." In fact, Arty said that when he was growing up and playing Irish music at home with his family, there were no guitars at all. Guitars were not a part of Irish music. He points to Paul Brady as one of the first artists who started to incorporate the guitar into Irish music as a rhythm instrument. Arty said, "Paul had been in the states and he came back in around '73 or '74 and joined Planxty. I had known him in the early 60s when he was in college in Dublin and then we started messing around and playing again and I liked what he was doing. He was using some open tunings, like open G tuning and drop D tuning. I liked that, so I started playing Irish tunes on the guitar around that time. It was Paul who really stimulated me to do it."

The admiration Arty has for Paul Brady is mutual. In the liner notes to Arty and Nollaig Casey's recording *Lead the Knave*, Paul Brady wrote: "The first time I became aware of Arty McGlynn's talent was back in the 60s when, lost in the crowd one night, I enviously watched his fingers cruise the neck of his Gibson 335. Arty McGlynn even then was recognized as one of the best guitar players in Ireland. If, like me, you were an aspiring guitarist, you didn't pass up an opportunity to catch him when he was in town."

Arty continues, "Donal Lunny also started backing tunes on guitar and using different arrangements that hadn't been done before. But in general the guitar was associated with Elvis Presley, and was looked upon as being a 'sexual' instrument, and so it wasn't very popular with Irish musicians. What also happened was that the people who did get guitars thought that they could just sit down and play with a fiddle player. But they didn't know the tunes. They thought, 'Well it is in D, so I can just play in D. And it was terrible for the musicians, so they would just leave. So guitars got a bad name because of that. It got to the point where traditional musicians would tell guitar players, 'look, if you open that case, I'm going to stop playing.' "

Reflecting on the technical aspects of his playing on *McGlynn's Fancy*, Arty said, "To me, it was no big deal. I was playing Django stuff, so to play tunes in the first position in D wasn't all that complicated. But I was amazed at the naiveté of people in Ireland, even in the late 70s, who were saying, 'How can you do that on a guitar? How can you play a reel on a guitar?' And I'm saying to them, 'Haven't you ever heard of Joe Pass or Django Reinhardt?' They had obviously never listened to the guitar. There is no big deal there. A little jig on a guitar?"

After *McGlynn's Fancy* began receiving airplay, Arty got a call from Tommy Makem and Liam Clancy and began working with their group. Makem and Clancy (of the Clancy Brothers) had been two of the pioneers of Irish folk music in the 1960s and performed to sold-out theaters all over Ireland. Arty said, "It was fantastic because it meant that I could still do my studio work and then work for a season in Ireland—two weeks at a theater in Dulbin, two weeks at a theater in Cork, and three weeks touring the country in the summer time. I was making really good money…money that I had never dreamt of, that I could never make in a show band. I was off stage at ten o'clock every night and playing with people that I really liked. Myself and a fiddle player would sit on stools behind Liam and Tommy backing them up. But then we would get to also go out front and do a solo spot, play a jig or something. That was in 1980."

While Arty did quite well playing with Clancy and Makem, the residual benefits that he gleaned from the success of his solo album did not stop there. In 1982 he got a call from Van Morrison

and was asked to join the Van Morrison Band. He spent seven years with Morrison's band, performing live and recording on both electric and acoustic guitars. Additionally, since Morrison's band did not work steadily, Arty played with a traditional Irish band called Patrick Street (founded in 1986 and featuring fiddler Kevin Burke).

After seven years playing with both Van Morrison and Patrick Street, the road began to become a grind again and Arty returned to studio work. Arty said, "I'm not very good on the road. I loved the music, but I didn't like the grind. When you are out on a fast-moving seven-week tour, after three weeks you don't even know what day it is."

In 1989 Arty recorded an album with his wife, fiddler Nollaig Casey, and the two began to tour as a duo. In 1990 they were awarded the Belfast Telegraph Entertainment Media and Arts Award for excellence in the field of folk music. Around that same time he also started working with piper Liam O'Flynn. To date he is still touring with both Nollaig and O'Flynn and he also keeps himself busy with studio work. As a composer, Arty has composed music for several television documentaries and together with Nollaig arranged and played music for the sound track of the Irish feature film *Moondance* as well as *Hear My Song*, in which they also made an appearance. More recently Arty and Nollaig played on the sound track of the film *Waking Ned Devine* where the music was composed by Shaun Davey.

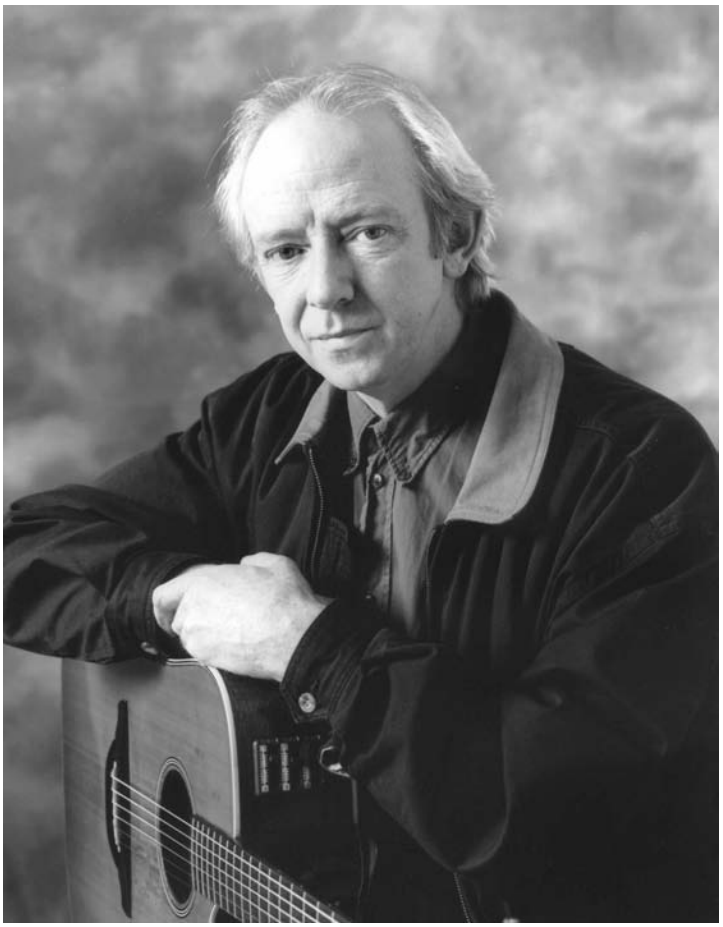
In addition to being a talented performer and composer, Arty is also a highly respected producer. The album *Barking Mad* by the group Four Men & a Dog, which Arty produced, was voted Folk Album of the Year by *Folk Roots Magazine*. He produced Christy Hennessy's album, *The Rehearsal*, which remained in the Irish charts continuously for eighteen months and also collaborated with Frances Black on her first two solo albums, *Talk to Me* and *The Sky Road*, both of which have topped the charts in Ireland and have been critically received in the UK and America.

Arty McGlynn started his life surrounded by traditional Irish music and then moved on to play rock, swing, and jazz on guitar for more than 20 years before going back to his roots. When asked about the technical aspects of playing these various styles of music, Arty said, "I just impose myself on it. I am not too concerned about what the tradition was. I suppose that when I am playing with Liam O'Flynn I play a little different than when I am playing with Frankie Gavin, for instance. Liam is a very straight traditional player and pipes are very modal or very melodic. He plays very old tunes that are modal and so I use the guitar more in a modal percussive form. But when I play with Frankie Gavin or Nolliag, they play different stuff and they don't mind if I stick in diminished chords, or whatever. So Irish music has changed in that way. Other people are doing that also. If the melody lends itself to a certain chord progression, then why not do it? I don't have any set rules. But at the same time there are certain things that I wouldn't dream of doing…I try to play what fits."

In his book *Accompanying Irish Music on Guitar* (distributed in the US by Mel Bay Publications), author Frank Kilkelly has this to say about Arty's rhythm style: "In accompanying, his style is first and foremost rhythmic. He uses primarily dropped D tuning and in his playing you can hear a percussive, crispy top end, as well as a beefy bass sound."

Rhythmically, for traditional Irish music, Arty likes to use a drop D modal tuning so that he gets four D notes when playing a D chord. When playing a G chord, he rarely plays the third (B note). In general, when playing with a piper, he likes to get a percussive rhythm, using passing tones and employing droning notes. But he says, "Different people want you to play different stuff. A lot of people play it with different ideas, so it will depend on who you are playing with." Since the guitar is not a traditional instrument in Irish music, Arty feels that the guitar player is not so much bound by a traditional way of playing the instrument in the context of traditional music, so there is some flexibility and free range of expression that is afforded the guitar. Arty adds, "You have to know what people like and don't like. In Ireland today it is very diverse."

Regarding lead playing for Irish music Arty says, "I think that Irish music sits very well on the guitar in standard tuning. Everything falls nicely in a four fret area of the fingerboard. And I find that if you use drop D, it is a lot easier than using DADGAD where you are using open strings. In DADGAD it is harder to get rolling. The hardest part (in drop D) is getting your small finger to work all the time. But it is not complicated music to play." Arty used drop D tuning for all of the tunes on *McGlynn's Fancy*. He said, "Drop D is ideal for Irish music."



Arty McGlynn

When Americans who grew up playing bluegrass and American folk music attempt to play Irish tunes, the hardest part to capture is the rhythm. Arty said, "It is a weird thing. If I hear Americans, or even English people playing Irish music, there is some little thing different about the rhythm. At the same time, if you hear us guys trying to play bluegrass music, there is something missing as well. I'm not sure what that thing is. There are some bands at home that are really good at playing bluegrass music, but there is something in the time that is missing. I don't know…I think that maybe it comes from the dancing. I think you have to see people dancing and hear the rhythms of the feet. Dancers are incredible. If you go down to Kerry and see people dance sets, the rhythms they do with their feet are incredible. It is a pretty uplifting thing. It is fantastic to play for dancers. You see these people moving and you get feedback off of it."

On the following pages we have transcribed Arty's arrangements of a medley from *McGlynn's Fancy*. The selection is a medley of two jigs, "Peter Byrne's Fancy" and "Creeping Docken." We have only transcribed the first solo to "Peter Byrne's Fancy" since the second time through is very similar. On *McGlynn's Fancy* Arty defines the tunes as jigs, reels, airs, and songs. The recording includes two songs (vocals), three reel medleys, two airs, and three jig medleys.

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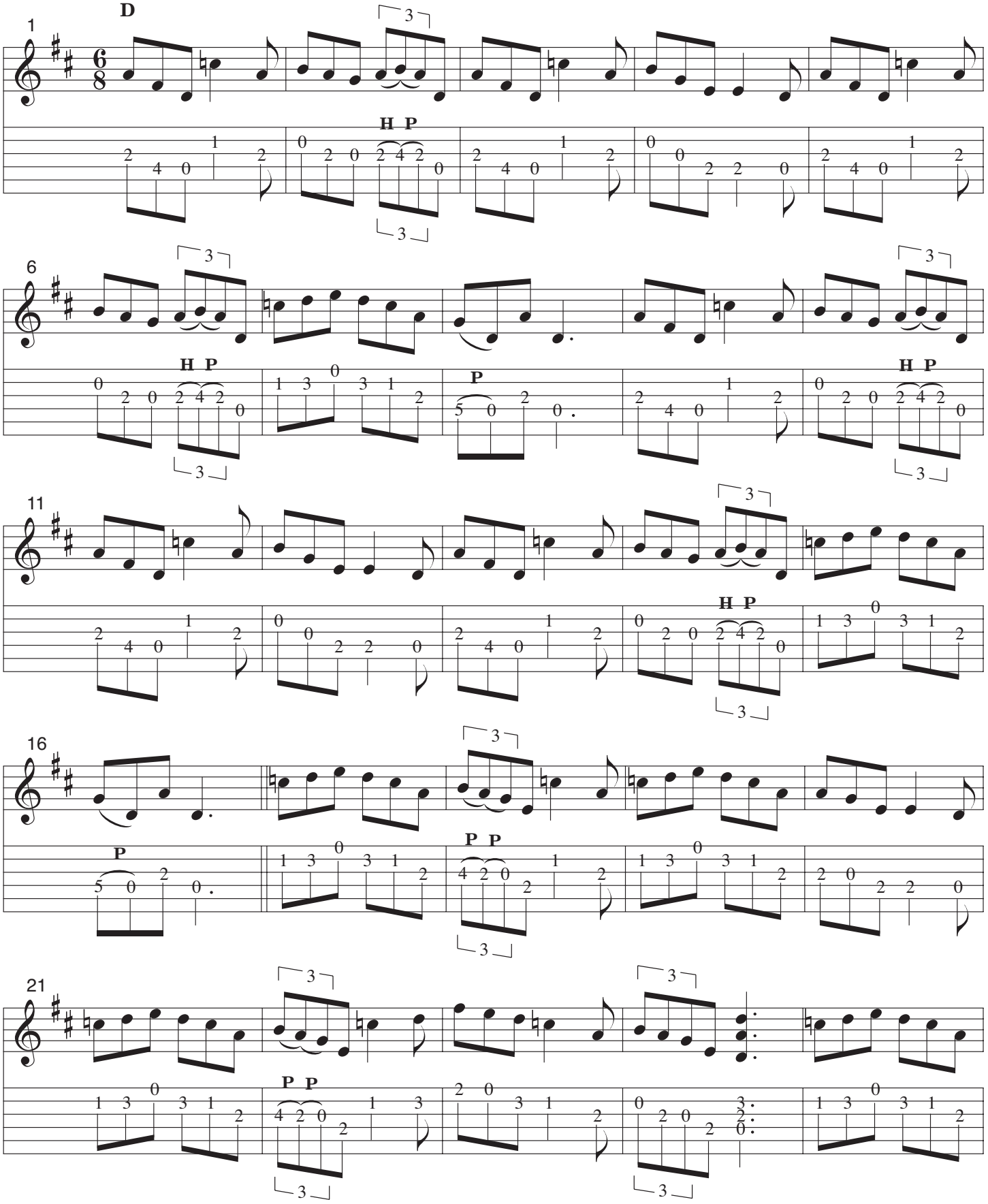
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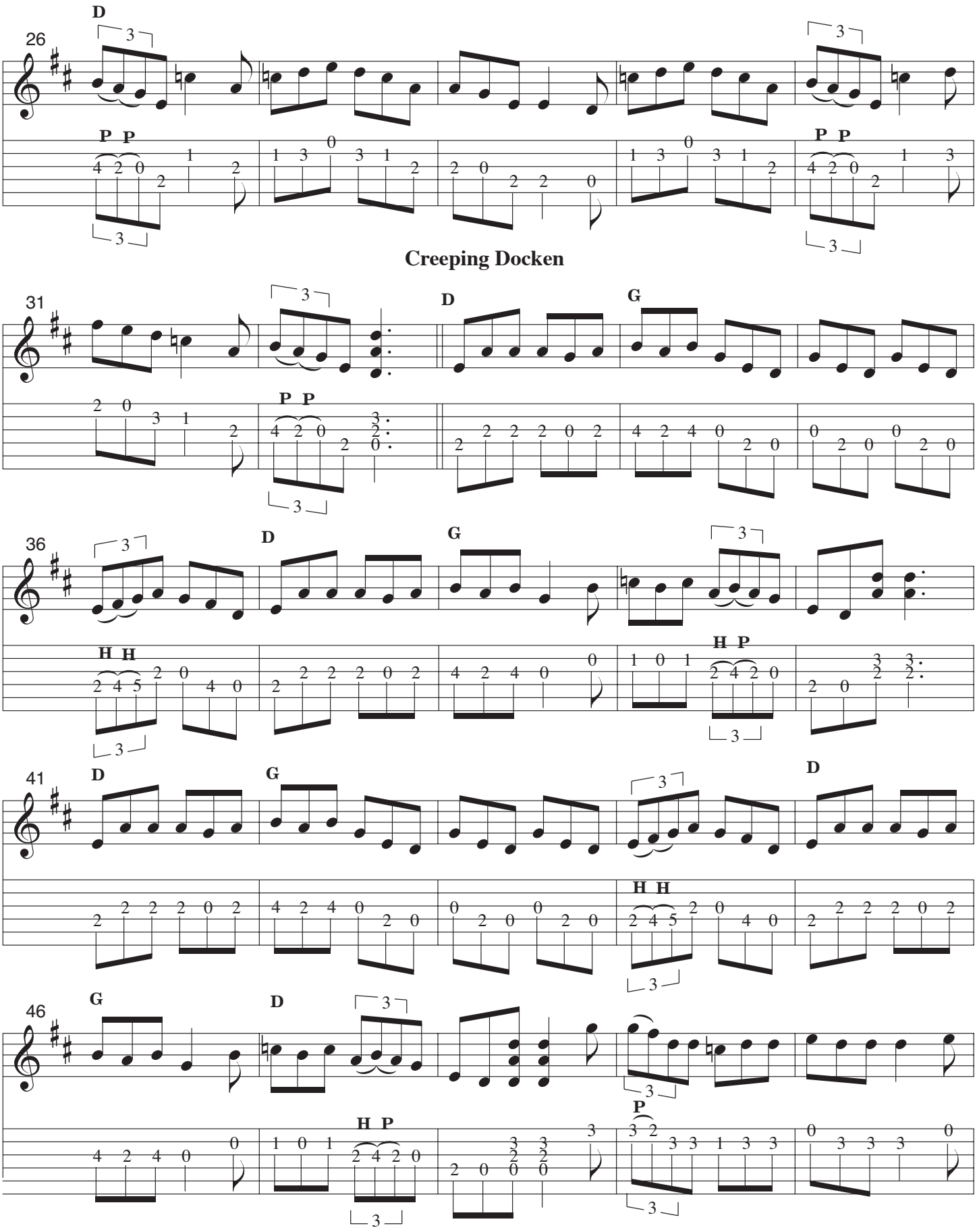
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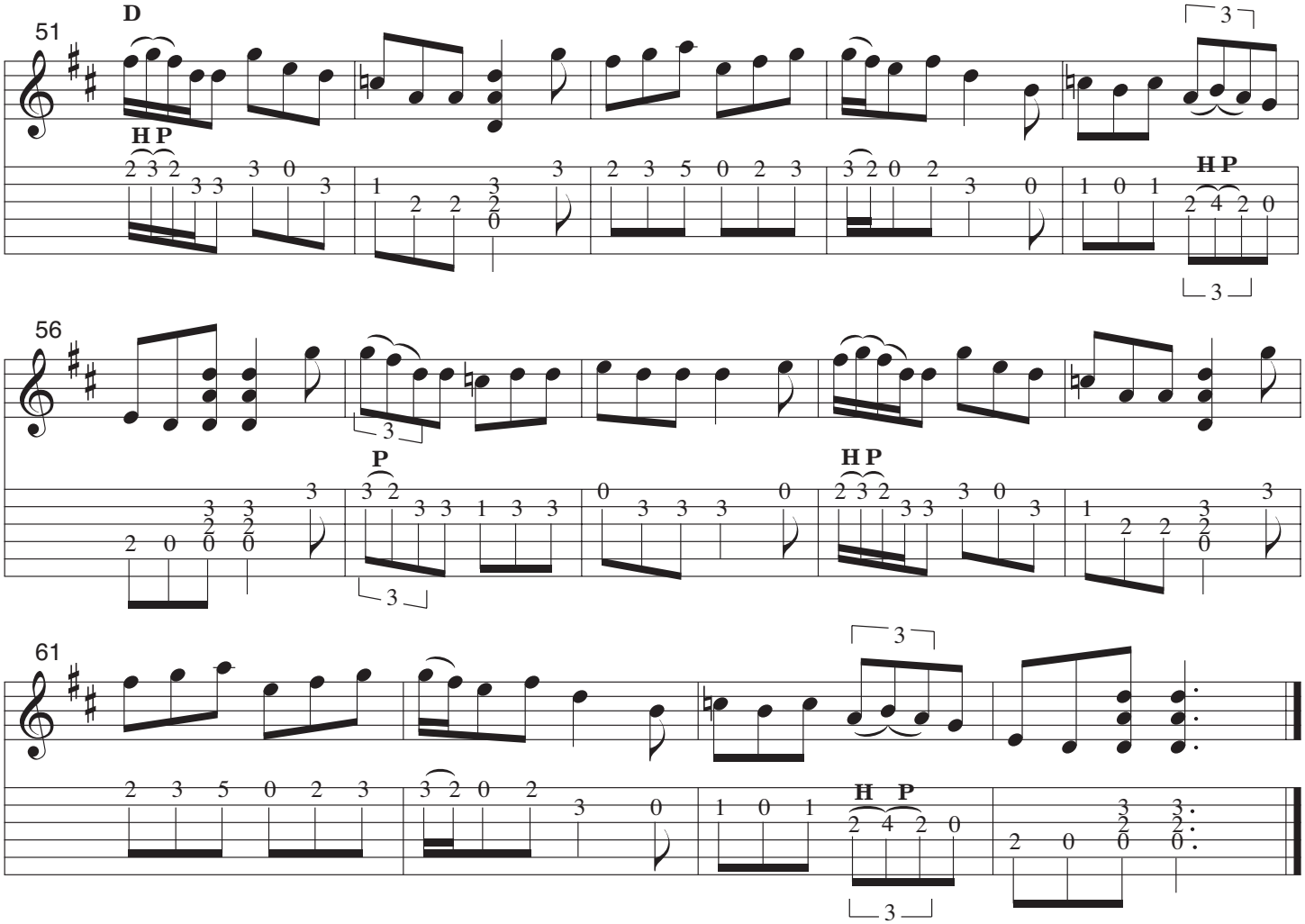
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The Rat up on the Harp

by Craig Vance

This tune was a collaborative effort between me and long time friend and co-bandmember, Chris Leske. We were playing at a nightclub in Saranac Lake, NY somewhere around 1985 or 1986, and someone blurted out, "Play something Irish!" We looked at each other and just kind of picked out the key of Am and started playing this piece. So I guess you can say that it was an improvised attempt at calming the rowdies in the place.

Over the years the tune has evolved and finally settled into what you see here. Our band, The McKrells, has recorded this tune on two live CDs that can be found on our website (www.mckrells.com).

Still to this day, this is a tune that we use to kick off many performances. We play it quite fast and with a serious punch. One thing I might add here is that while we use such a fast tune to kick off a show, it is extremely important to put in some warm up time before going on. Without doing so, you could seriously injure yourself.

A great number of Celtic tunes are slow, sometimes waltz time, sometimes jig or reel like, but this takes it to another level entirely.

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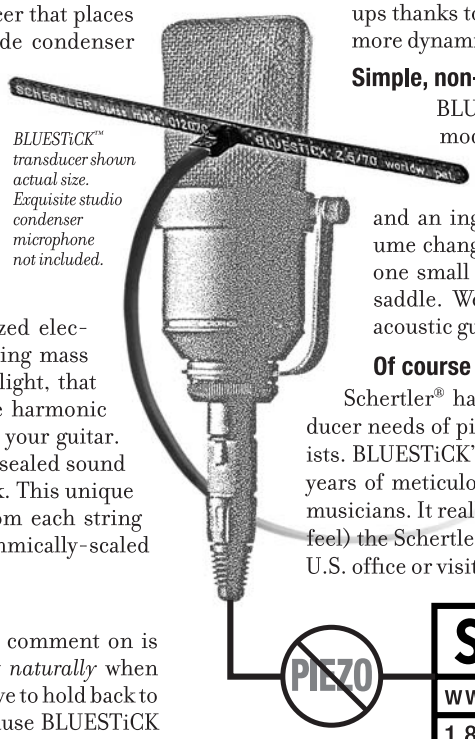

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The Rat Up On The Harp

Written by Craig Vance &
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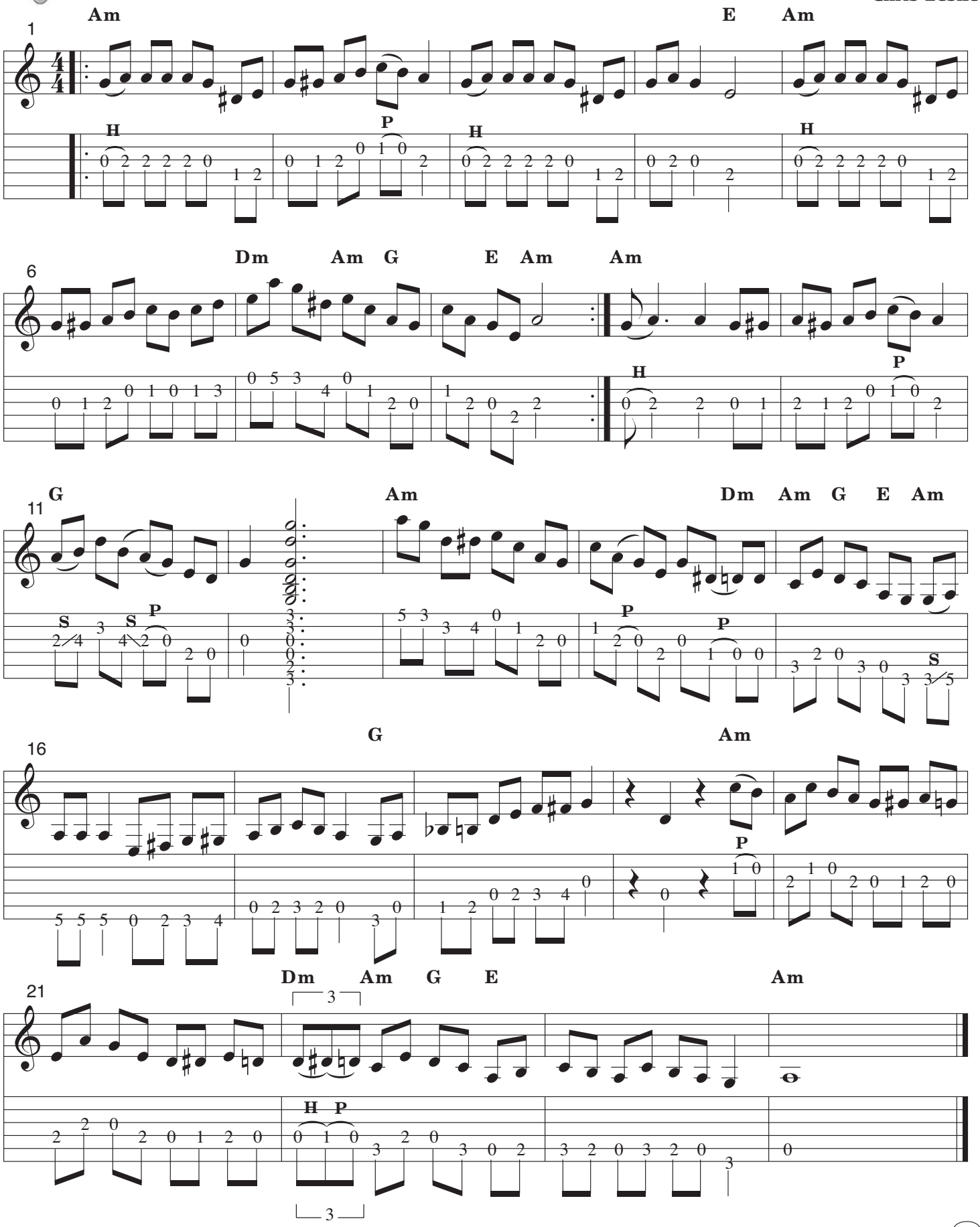
Beginner's Page

by Dan Huckabee

Your Dream Practice Room

"There's a world where I can go and tell my secrets to. In my room. In my room." Well that's the way Beach Boy Brian Wilson felt about the sanctity of that most special of places. And maybe he wouldn't have even written that tune if it he hadn't put some careful planning into its setup. So I'm suggesting that a well set up practice room can be significantly inspiring to "your" musical progress.

Recently I've had more than one customer order a VHS tape of one of our lessons simply because the VHS player got relegated to the practice-room, when the family bought a new DVD machine for the living room. Obviously having a private place to practice is a win-win situation. You won't drive the family crazy and they won't distract you.

In my practice room, I have a wall with hooks where I hang my guitar, dobro, mandolin, and fiddle. There's nothing else on that wall. I set it up this way for two reasons. The first is so the instruments will tempt me. I know I'm going to practice more if they're readily available and I know that just the sight of them out in plain view is hard to resist. The other reason to have them out of the case is so that air can get to them. Guitars need to breathe. Guitars need to vibrate. Guitars need to age. 30 years ago Jerry Douglas told me that he habitually takes his dobro out of the case as soon as he gets home and sets it on its stand. I'm sure he still does that today and his instruments probably get a little better circulation on the stand than mine do on the wall, but I feel like the wall is a good place to protect them from getting knocked over.

You should design your set up like an efficient office. All of your music collection should be categorized and accessible along with your lesson materials and the devices that play them. Its not a bad idea to have a good music stand, tuner, extra strings, string winder, wire cutters, metronome, electronic drummer, lick learning machines, picks, capos, pencils, blank tab-writing paper, music books, finger-ease, towels, rags, headphones, computer, reading glasses (for aging baby boomers), a keyboard (oh yes, the piano/keyboard is a great reference tool for the flatpicking guitar player), and other accessories. Then, the most important accessory of all: a really nice chair! I think we all need a chair that doesn't have arms that get in the way of your guitar or that can scratch it up, and one that encourages good posture. (Obviously, the more comfortable you are, the longer you'll stay and practice). If you're a bit of a handyman, you might want to custom make your chair but keep in mind that there are companies that make specially designed picking chairs. With all the stuff listed above, you might consider a chair that swivels and/or one with rollers so that you can access various tools with minimal effort and minimal interruption to the music that you're concentrating on.

After you've collected all of the elements, its time to arrange the room so that everything can be reached comfortably and logically. Maybe a desk with drawers for various accessories, getting your speakers at ear level, tucking all your electrical wires neatly away, and of course having all of your *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* Beginners Page articles color coded with post-it notes.

Your private practice room should be the place that takes you away from all distractions, relieves stress, and puts you in the zone. A perfect place in an imperfect world. Surely this is the place where inspiration will make its appearance.

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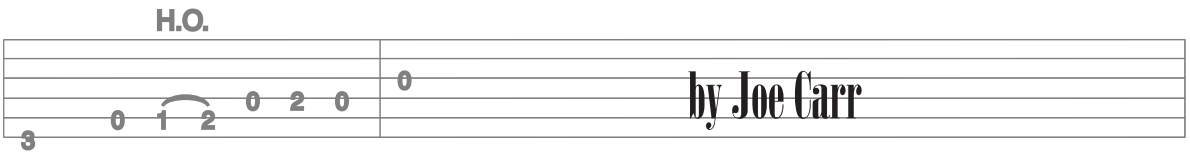

by Joe Carr

Playing Rhythm: John Doyle "Crested Hens"

Dublin-born guitarist John Doyle has lent his talents to many top Irish and world music stars. As a founding member of the Irish super-group Solas, Doyle played the driving rhythm style that was the backbone of their successful sound. Since leaving Solas, Doyle continues to make a name for himself as a solo performer and as a guitarist with Eileen Ivers, Liz Carroll, Tim O'Brien, and others.

Doyle, who plays guitar left-handed and reversed, has produced an instructional video from Homespun Tapes detailing his approach to Irish-style rhythm guitar. His new solo CD *Evening Comes Early* further establishes him as an important world music artist.

"Crested Hens" (Les Poules Huppees) comes from the first Solas CD (entitled simply *Solas*) released by Shanachie in 1996. This beautiful tune was written by French hurdy-gurdy player Gilles Chabena. According to *The Fiddler's Companion* at the Irish music Internet site ceolas.org:

"Chabenat … remarks that some bars of a Debussy composition served as inspiration for the germ of the tune. It is of a type from Central France, where it is also a folk dance, and is usually played at a medium tempo though this tune is often heard slower a la Solas."

Doyle plays this tune fingerstyle, but this flatpick arrangement stays very close to the original. There is also a low D note on the recording in the next to last measure. I transposed this note up one octave to make it playable in standard tuning. Perhaps Doyle was playing a seven-string guitar.

The tune is written in D to accommodate the melody although G is more accurate for the rhythm. Eminor add9 is a recurring chord in the A section. This chord could also be called an Eminor2, since it spells 1, 5, 2 (9), b3, 5, 1. The C6 chord in the B part could be called a C 6/9 (finger the D note on the second string). The final Cmajor7#11 is just named conveniently. It spells 1, #11 (#4 or b5), maj7, 3.

Many of Doyle's chords contain the open first and second string. Often it is best not to analyze these notes as part of the chord. These notes add to the "spacey," droning sound of the accompaniment and may not be intended as part of the harmonic name of the chord. This is a characteristic of much Celtic guitar back-up.

John Doyle Interview

John Doyle was the original driving force of the Irish music supergroup Solas. His stellar rhythm guitar work on that group's first album (Solas, 1996) is a standout. Now solo performances, tours with Liz Carroll, Tim O'Brien and others, and his new recordings have spread the name of this talented performer worldwide.

What inspired you to play the guitar?

I was inspired first to play the guitar because of a bet with a friend of mine as to who could learn to play guitar first.

As soon as I started playing, I got obsessed with it and took up my father's guitar and played upside down [left handed] for a number of years until I got my own. Traditional music was a big part of my household —my dad is a singer and accordion player, my grandfather was an accordion player, my brother is a flute player, and my other brothers sing.

My mother loved all kinds of music and we always had all sorts of stuff playing in the house. My first memories of music are going to a session that my grandfather used to play in at O'Grady's Pub in Coolaney, County Sligo. My father used to bring me

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and my brothers when we were little and we'd have Cokes and crisps and be bored.

How old were you when you began to play?

I was around 11 or 12 when I started playing.

What sort of music training did you have?

Zero. Well, listening to all sorts of records and different players that I loved to hear and trying copy them was my main source. Also going to sessions when I was starting to play and forming a style and learning what was right and what was wrong.

Did you seek any particular teachers, artists or method books? Do you play any other instruments besides the guitar and is there any advantage or disadvantage to being a multi-instrumentalist?

I didn't have any particular teachers or books, never even told anyone in school I was playing music. But I did used to listen obsessively to Richard Thompson, Martin Carthy, Nic Jones, Nick Drake, Arty McGlynn, Dick Gaughan, and Al O'Donnell, to name a few. I do play bouzouki, banjo, mandolin, and a bit of electric guitar. I am learning fiddle and whistle. If you're starting off learning to play several instruments at once you can become a jack-of-all-trades instead of a master of one. Some gifted people can do it. It spreads out time of rehearsing across several different instruments. Advantages are that if you learn something on one instrument, it seems to transpose easier to other instruments. Also, if you're a professional musician, it gives you more options when recording or whatever. It's also fun.

What styles interested you when you first began to play? How did those preferences influence your current music?

On the guitar there were two sides—one was traditional backing of tunes and I really enjoyed learning that style. And then there was the English folk style that I had a particular keen interest in and that had a lot of unusual tunings and finger-style patterns that I still love and am involved with, especially for the backing of songs.

Is there anyone you'd like to collaborate with?

I've been so lucky to record and/or tour with some great people—Tim O'Brien, Linda Thompson, Liz Carroll, Kate Rusby…it's a long list and I don't want to leave anyone out!

What musical avenues do you wish to explore in the future?

I'll probably set up a band sometime in the near future. The problem to this point has just been finding the time. I've been writing a fair amount in the past year or so and hope to be doing more of that. I'd like to do an a cappella harmony singing group singing traditional songs and also somewhere down the line, get my family out playing and do some good old Sligo-style tunes and songs. I'd also like to do some film work as well…and I love producing.

What keeps you interested in the music business?

It's something I always loved doing. Most all of my friends and family are involved someway in the business or music so my whole sphere really is musical. It's not always an easy way to make a living, but it's very rewarding and you meet so many great people and get to travel so much, which I love, and I guess in the end I really enjoy standing up in front of people and playing.

John Doyle

Which of your albums would you recommend to someone buying one of your recordings for the first time?

Well, of course I would recommend my first solo record, *Evening Comes Early* (Shanachie Records) because it's the first record where I got to decide everything that I wanted to go on it. And there's such a good variety of material. I have a new solo one coming out soon on Compass Records and also one of my dad's that I produced which is also on Compass and will be out soon. I'm playing on it and it says a lot about my influences. My wife really thinks the first Solas CD, *Solas* (Shanachie Records) is especially good.

How did you get started in the music business?

I started to play sessions in pubs first. Then I used to busk for a good bit in Dublin and around Ireland and then started playing with a lovely singer named Susan McKeown. We started to do gigs around Dublin and Ireland, and then some abroad in Europe and then eventually moved to NYC.

Any recommendations for those looking to go into this field?

Beware of record companies, get a good lawyer, and don't sell yourself short. It also helps to be in love with what you do. If you're doing it for other reasons, you're bound to get tripped up at some point. It's a fickle business.

How did you assemble the body of technique you possess now? Do you teach or act as a musical mentor now?

Well, you learn what you learn. Just over the course of years you get interested in different types and styles of playing, rhythms, etc. And I just incorporated as much of what interested me into my playing as I could muster. I practiced a lot as my family would tell you, in front of the TV, playing along with ads and Star Trek, different things, driving them crazy. That saying about your style being more influenced by what you can't do I think is quite true: you learn your own way to get around things or

get certain sounds, etc. and it may not be exactly what the person you're listening to did, but it works anyway. I broke a lot of strings trying to find tunings. I sometimes do a teaching week here or there. I was at the Swannanoa Gathering in North Carolina this year and last; Friday Harbor teaching week on San Juan Island, WA; and Milwaukee. I'll probably do Augusta Heritage Week in Elkins, West Virginia next year. I don't really do private teaching simply because of time constraints but I try to give tips to as many people as I can.

Have you produced any instructional materials?

I have a video on Homespun Tapes and Records and a CD-ROM on MadForTrad.com. Both of these are very good I think.

Any particular teaching or learning techniques?

No, not really, I just sit down with the guitar or fiddle or whatever any time I can really. It seems to be the thing that I'd rather do most any time. For the guitar, it helps to make up stuff, little riffs, little tunes, etc. just to know your way around inside and out.

Any technical strengths and weaknesses?

Fingerstyle is not my major thing. I never really got into different styles of finger-style playing, blues, whatever, but I've learned my way around to get the sound that I want. I'm not able to use my middle finger on my picking hand when I'm playing pick and fingers together. That annoys me. Strengths —I've been told I have good rhythm.

How do you keep your repertoire fresh sounding?

I try to keep on challenging myself, learning new stuff. Different keys, different tunings for different keys, different instruments —how to play a certain riff on a mandolin or fiddle as oppose to guitar. I listen to great players and try and emulate them.

Do you use alternate tunings?

I love them. It's like having so many more colors to paint with, trite I know, but true.

Any thoughts about role of rhythm guitar and job of rhythm guitarist?

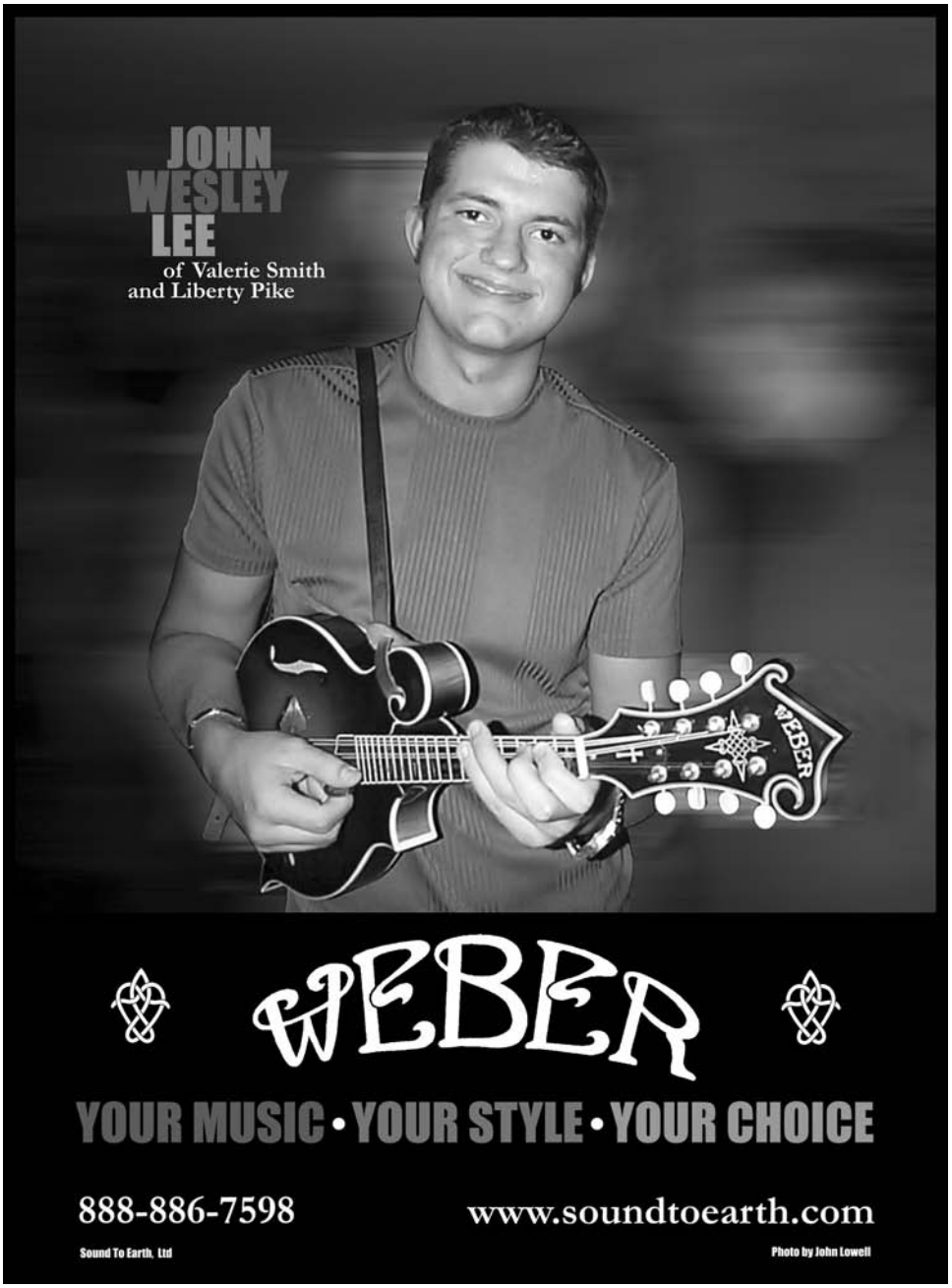
Well, I've always thought that it's great to have strong rhythm of course, but there's so much more the rhythm player can do. Besides style and finesse, dynamics, etc. in traditional music (tunes), I've always looked at playing rhythm as creating an underlying tune in itself underneath a reel or a jig for example. It seems to give the tune more depth and variation. I'm also a pretty syncopated player. Knowing the tunes thoroughly is helpful for this so that you're confident in where you're going. As for songs, I try to make it fit the mood of the song and the singer first and foremost. To try and make everyone sound good, that's my job. You can't force your sense of rhythm (some players are ahead of the beat and some are behind it) on the singer —you have to go where they are going.

When arranging and composing for the guitar, do you actually write out the music and the tab or do you prefer exploring with guitar in hand?

Definitely exploring with guitar in hand—I don't write music or tab and I'm constantly noodling, which is how I usually come up with the start to a tune or song. I might have a line or two of lyrics or a line of a tune that gets stuck in my head, and I'll just sit down and work it out over a period of days or weeks, sometimes moments.

What source of inspiration do you draw upon?

All kinds, really. I might read something that gets me going, a story or a line in a poem, moods, stuck in traffic, and like



everyone who writes—things going on one's personal life as well. Sometimes it's writing for a particular singer.

Do different guitars in your collection inspire different types of tunes?

My wife has a lovely 1938 Martin 0-18 that totally inspired my playing on Linda Thompson's last CD, *Fashionably Late*, especially the song "Nine Stone Rig." It made me play much more like an English folk guitar player would for some reason. It had that sound. I think Martin Carthy must use an old Martin so it must have some of that sound in it. I have a little high-strung Larriveé guitar that sounds completely different, of course, and I play totally different stuff on it. My Martin D-28 is my great rhythm playing guitar. It has whatever I need it to for backing up tunes. My Fylde is a great all-rounder but especially good for open tunings and my Lowden is great for more moody finger-picking stuff.

Do you ever use a thumb pick or a flat pick?

No thumbpicks ever but flat picks a lot, mainly the Dunlop nylon 60mm. In summer or hot weather, I use the Dunlop nylon 73mm. And then a harder pick for flatpicking sometimes.

Gear?

I use D'Addario strings, Baggs pick-ups and pre-amps, Fylde, Martin, and Lowden guitars, and a Trillium bouzouki made by Bob Abrams. As for new instruments, always new guitars of course. My Martin D-28 is a right handed guitar and I'm a lefty. I've had to have work done on the bridge and saddle setup on occasion and would love a proper lefty Martin one of these days. A nice classical guitar and another little small bodied old Martin would be nice so I don't keep turning the strings around on my wife's. She goes to play it and it's upside down for her—she doesn't realize that it's mine now [only joking].

Do you recommend professional or self-management?

Hmm—both have their ups and downs. It's good to do it yourself or have a family member involved because you always know exactly what's going on and there's no one who would have a better-vested interest in your success. But then, you can't get away from it easily either. Professional management costs and one needs to be careful that the potential payoffs from professional management offset the expenses. It's also more difficult sometimes to know exactly what's going on unless you have a very open-door policy with your manager. A professional manager will have other priorities as well, not just you. Tricky.

Upcoming performance dates?

Check the website www.JohnDoyleMusic.com.

Any tips on touring, performance etiquette, or artist/venue relations?

Well I tour an awful lot. Don't burn yourself out. It's hard work and make sure to know your priorities. I take care of my health, try to work in a good walk most days when I'm on the road, try to have as much information possible with me for each venue. Performance etiquette—be open, don't be afraid to let go. Be nice to people, venue managers included. Always appreciate the sound people—they can be your best friend or worst enemy.

What projects do you currently have on the front burner?

Well I've just finished producing a new solo CD, *Cherish the Ladies*, for a great singer, Heidi Talbot. That's on Compass and will be out early 2004. There are four of my songs on it so I'm particularly happy about this one. My dad's new one, which I produced for Compass will be out later on in 2004 (Sean Doyle). My new one I'm pretty excited about—so far I've got six tracks down with some marvelous players: Danny Thompson on bass, Stuart Duncan and Kasey Dreissen on fiddles, Kenny Malone on percussion, John Williams on accordion/concertina. I'm sure there'll be a fair few others before it's all over with. I'm going to be recording with Alison Brown, which will be fun, and a new Cathie Ryan CD and also a new Liz Carroll/John Doyle CD. I've also been asked to record some stuff with John McCusker for a new BBC television show with Billy Connolly.

Apart from music what are your interests?

Playing music. Reading. Playing music. Walking. Playing music. Ancient history, mythology, I'm a complete *Lord of the Rings* nerd, travel, disaster shipwreck stories, in fact most things to do with the sea.

[Some questions and responses were edited for space considerations. The interview was conducted by email. Special thanks to Drew Andrews of Mel Bay Publications for use of his questionnaire format.]

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Crested Hens

Arranged by John Doyle
Transcribed by Joe Carr

Melody

1

6

1.

2.

11

Rhythm

16

1.

2.

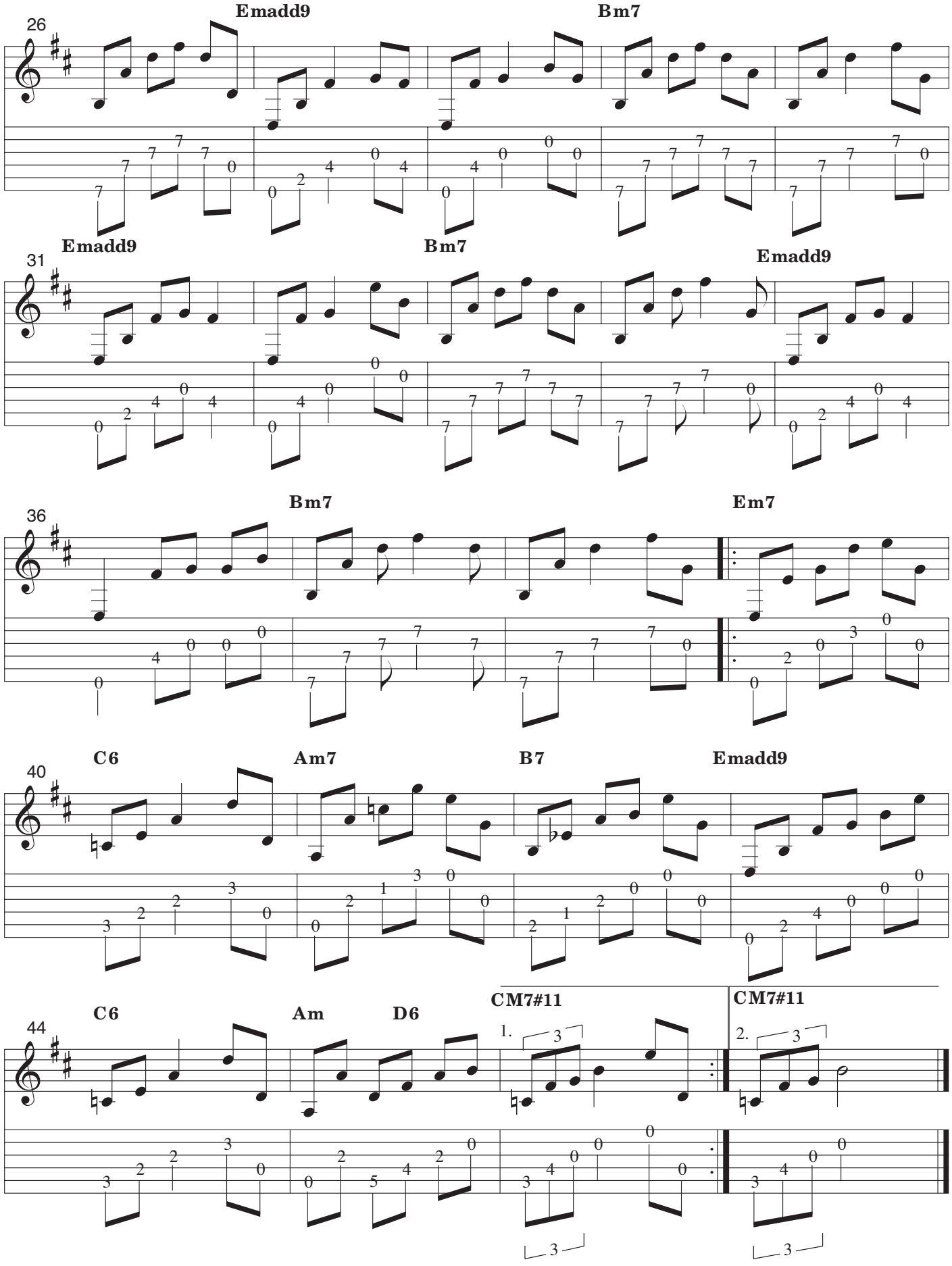
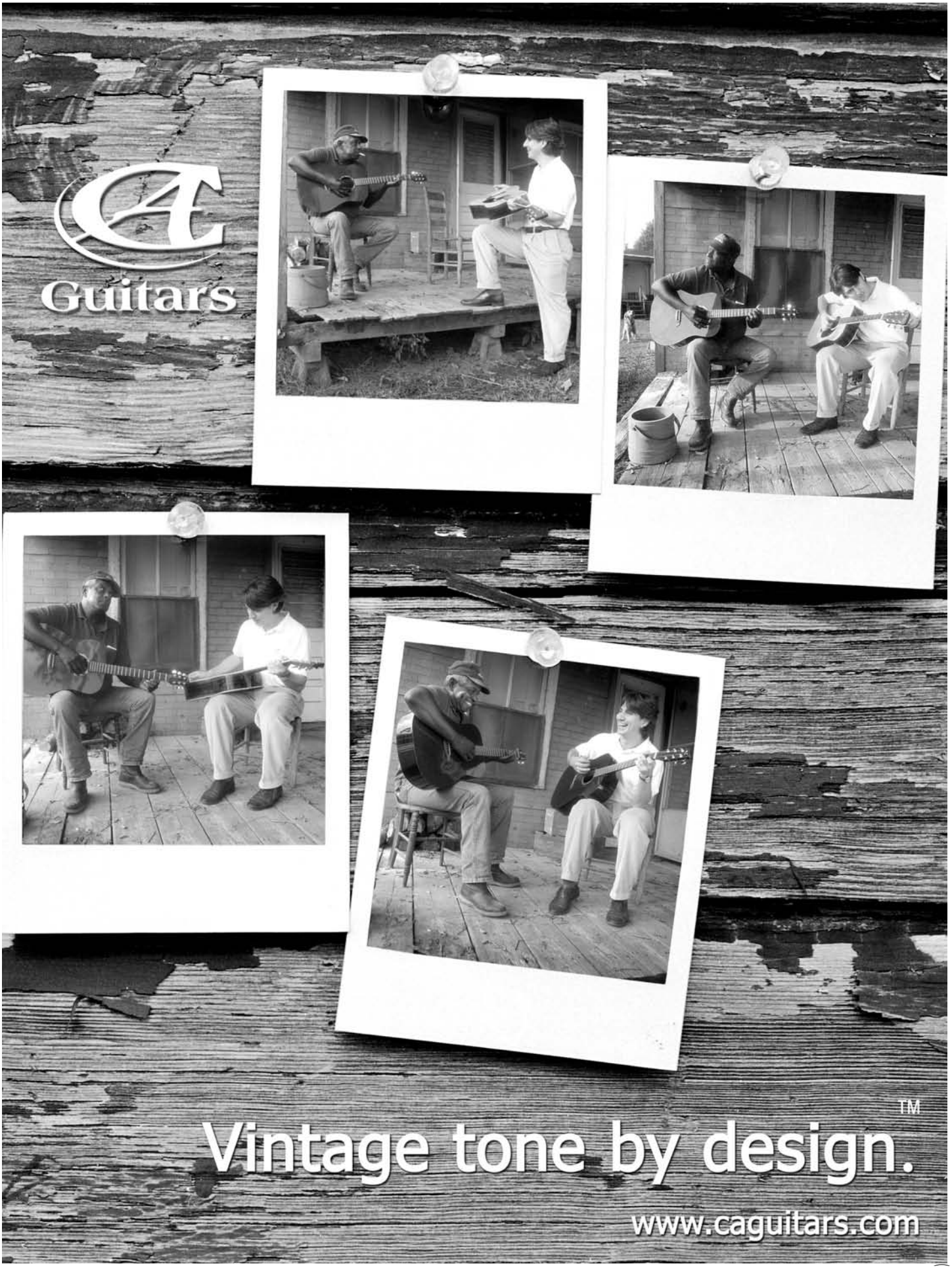
Emadd9

Bm7

Emadd9

Bm7

21

Crested Hens (con't)


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Guitar Maintenance and Repair

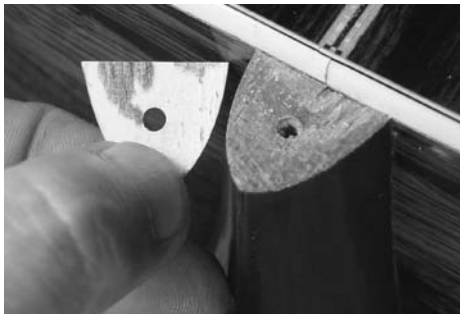
by Frank Ford

A New Heel Cap

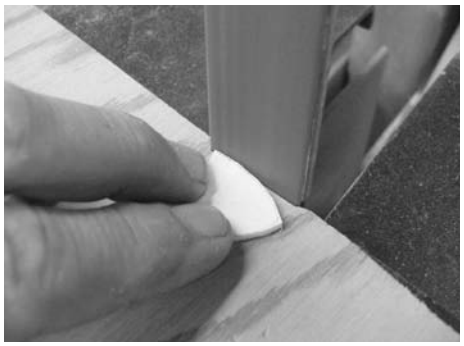
With the ongoing discussions about the ideal location for a strap button, I thought I'd make a case for installing a strap button right into the heel cap.

Sure, the guitar doesn't balance as well with the button in this location, but at least you can remove the button without a trace by carefully replacing the heel cap. It's rare for a Martin heel cap to need replacing. Sometimes one might become unglued and get lost, but usually the reason for replacement is the removal of a strap button.

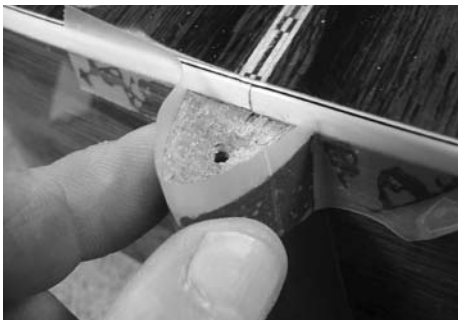
My favorite way to fix this hole is to inlay a little pearl dot. It can be done very neatly and cheaply, and it looks pretty good. But if you really want to do it up nicely, replacing the heel cap is the way to go. First, I pry the cap off with a thin blade. These little guys can really be stuck in place, so I take it easy and work around all sides to avoid splitting the heel:



This cap is ivoroid, so I'll look around the shop to find a piece of 0.080" thick ivoroid material that matches the color as closely as possible. I buy old ivoroid dresser items like trays and brushes at garage sales so I often have bits of vintage material hanging around.



With the outline traced on, I'll use my little one inch wide belt sander to shape the part about 1/32" oversize, so I won't have any problem gluing it on center. The glue I'll be using has a strong solvent action that can easily damage the finish of the neck heel, so I'll press on some clear plastic tape making sure to get a seamless bond right up at the upper edge of the finish:

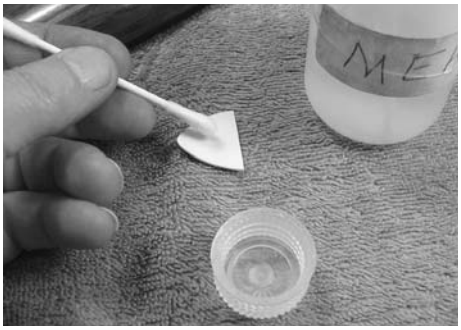


With a single edge razor blade, I can easily trim off the little bit of tape that sticks up:

Because the new heel cap is quite thick, there's no need for me to fill the screw hole in the heel. A bit of medium viscosity cyanoacrylate is the ideal glue to get a good bond for the new heel cap:

To make sure the glue really "bites" into the ivoroid, I paint on just a bit of acetone to soften the surface. :

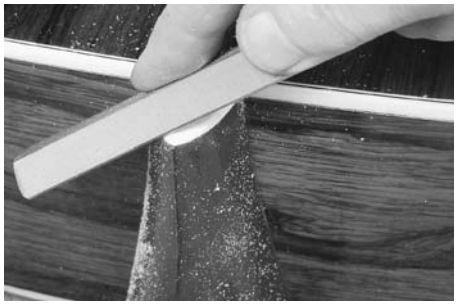
Then I press the cap in place a minute, until the glue sets, and remove the tape, along with any squeezed out glue:



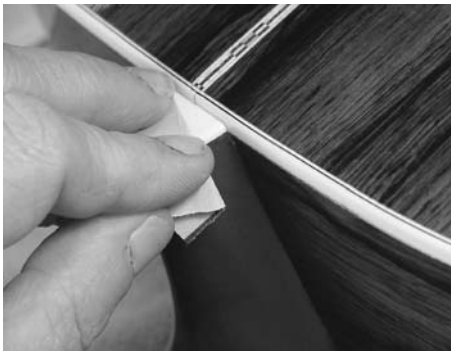
I'm in a hurry to get any squeezed out glue away from the finished surface. This guitar was finished with traditional nitrocellulose lacquer, which is mighty reactive stuff, so I try to minimize any possible exposure to solvents. Allowing a day for the glue to cure fully, I trim the overhang. Notice that I'm holding the wide bevel of the knife flat against the finish of the heel. That way, I won't scratch the finish as I cut up and away at the heel cap:

I scrape the last micro bit of the cap with a razor blade, with its edge burnished and a piece of tape protecting the finish. Using this simple technique, I'm able to level the edge of the heel cap without scratching the lacquered surface:

Martin heel caps are rounded at the edges to soften the lines. I accomplish this with a few file strokes:

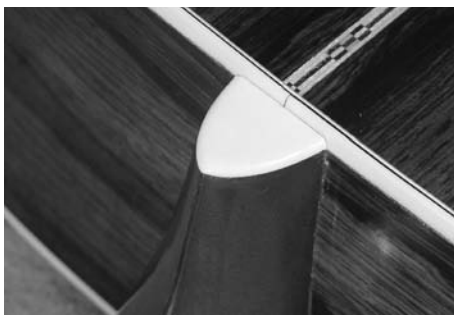


A bit of gentle sanding completes the shaping of the heel cap:



My new ivoroid looks a bit starkly white in comparison to the binding because the finish on the binding had yellowed with UV exposure. I'll paint on a few coats of my special amber lacquer to get just the right color:

My amber lacquer is actually regular clear lacquer that I've set out on my garage roof in a clear glass bottle for a few months' UV exposure. By aging lacquer in that way, I get the exact color that dry lacquer turns as it is normally exposed to light. And, after a judicious bit of finish leveling and polishing, you'd be hard pressed to identify this as a new heel cap:



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Kaufman's Corner

by Steve Kaufman

The Rose In The Heather

Hi, friends and welcome back to my corner of the world. Happy New Year again from all of us at Flatpik Central.

This is a beautiful tune this time around. If you have been to the land of the kilts and the Celts (both pronounced with a hard "K" sound) you would have seen the fields and hills abundant in heather. It's just beautiful when in bloom but difficult to manage the thorny undergrowth. Therefore a likely subject for many Celtic tunes.

I play this tune with the D-U-D D-U-D method because of the tone I can get and the power on the first of the three notes tied. I feel you should either D-U-D D-U-D or D-U-D U-D-U but not D-D-D D-D-D. I think whenever possible start the set of three notes on the down.

Fingerings: This tune is in the key of D so you should plant yourself in second position. The first finger hits the second frets, second finger the third frets and so on. This will get you easily through the first section.

In the [B] section at measure 15 you will see a position change. Hit the 7th fret in measure 15 with the second finger. In the next measure, play the7th fret with the third finger and the first finger to the 5th fret ("A") on the first string. Using these fingerings throughout the next several measures until you get to the open first string and you have a chance to go back down south to the nut.

You will have a blast with this one. Jigs don't have to be fast so just keep it pretty. See you down the road!

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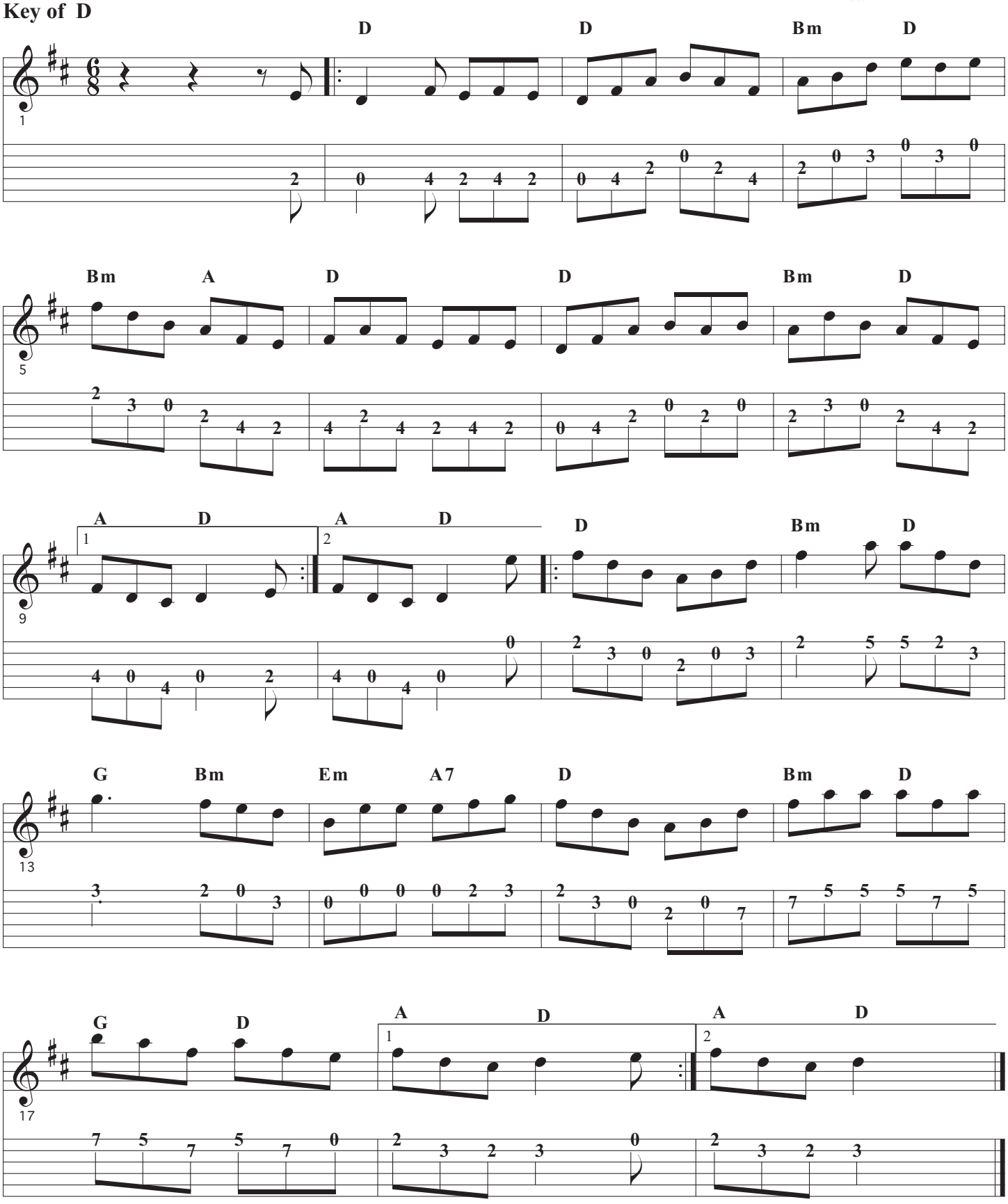
Adventures in Acoustic Music: Be Bop Part II

by John Carlini

In one sense, guitar playing is a matter of familiarization with forms achieved through constant repetition. Chord progressions, no matter how basic or sophisticated, can be expressed (realized) using no more than three notes per chord!

Our example this time is an exercise in using three-note chord forms to realize a typical bebop progression, and then a linear exercise which reflects those chords. Correct hand and finger position is very important. So, please keep the thumb of your left hand behind the neck and an imaginary golf ball in the palm of your left hand, making a vise out of your left hand. The chord forms utilize the 6th, 4th, and 3rd strings, so the 5th string must be dampened. Whichever finger frets the 6th string also dampens the 5th string by touching that string in the first joint area of the finger. I have included the suggested fingering in the examples and on the recording as well.

The definitive tones of a chord, that is, the tones which give the chord its character, (Maj7, min7, dom7, etc.) are the 3rds and the 7ths. They can be either major or minor (flatted). So, looking at the first chord, Emin7, the flatted 3rd is G (4th string, 5th fret, first finger), and the flatted 7th is D (3rd string, 7th fret, fourth finger). You are no doubt wondering about the root, E. We could play that E on the 5th string, but I have chosen to put the fifth (B) in the bass in order to "open" the chord up to give it a more pleasing sound, and also to create a smooth bass line as the chords progress. It is not essential to include the root in a chord. It is essential that you know what and where the root is! These chords are in constant motion and it is that evolving process that creates the sound of the progression.

There are a few other curious things to mention about these three-note forms. Each form can have multiple names depending on where the root happens to be. Notice that the form for F diminished (which does not contain an F!) is the same as the form for A7(b9) which is one fret below! This is where confusion can occur for sure. But, the most important thing to achieve is for your "ear" to hear the effectiveness of the progression and to "internalize" the sounds of the chords. (And to know where the root really is!) If you move that F diminished chord around in 4-fret leaps you will hear the F diminished sound (and you will pick up an F). In the case of A7(b9), the b9 (Bb) is on the bottom of the chord. Again, there is no root, and as mentioned earlier, it contains the flatted 7th, (G, 4th string, 5th fret) and the third (C#, 3rd string, 6th fret). Practice the forms, using the correct fingering until you can play the progression smoothly.

Now try the melodic exercise. This line is designed to provide the sound of the chords even if the chords are not played! One thing to watch for is the use of positions II and III. It begins in Position II (4th finger, 5th fret). On the third beat of the second measure it shifts to Position III (1st finger, 3rd fret). On the first beat of the third measure it shifts back to Position II where it stays till the end of the exercise.

This has been a "bite" of theory! But that's how it gets done: One bite at a time! Till next time, have fun!

Please visit John's web site (www.johncarlini.com) for the latest performance info and acoustic music news. Check out the new CD by the John Carlini Quartet, "The Game's Afoot!"—featuring Don Stiernberg, Brian Glassman, and Steve Holloway, w/special guest, Pat Cloud—at www.fgmrecords.com.

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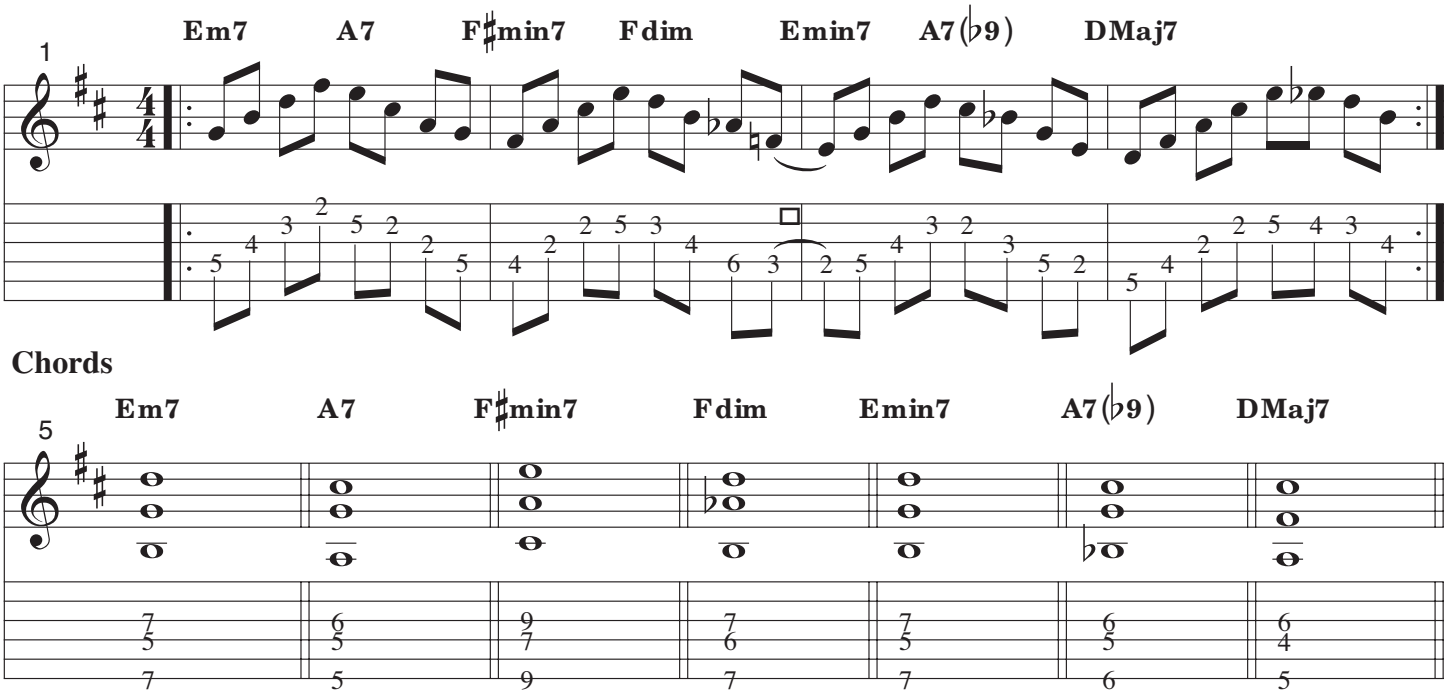
Be Bop Exercise



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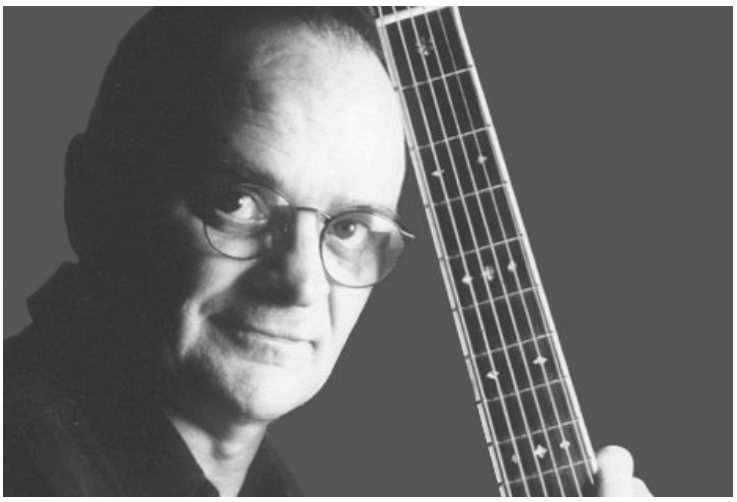
Flatpick Profile:
Chris Newman

by Dan Miller



When I first heard Chris Newman play the guitar in a concert two years ago with his musical partner, Irish harpist Maire Ni Chathasaigh, I was stunned. He moved around the fingerboard with tremendous fluidity and ease. He played phrases that were totally foreign to my ear, and thus extremely captivating. I remember, in my guitar player's brain, watching him play and thinking how complex his playing seemed. I was thinking, "I would never be able to do that!" Yet, at the same time there was such simplicity, elegance, and tastefulness to the music he was making that it boggled my mind. Chris is one of those rare players that have a very high degree of technical skill and proficiency, yet remains extremely musical and tasteful.

Raised in the North of England, Yorkshire, it was sibling rivalry that brought Chris his first guitar when he was just five years old. He recalls, "I have a brother who is ten years older than me. In the 50s he was into Buddy Holly and skiffle, which was a big thing in England at the time. He got a guitar for his birthday. His birthday is in September and mine is in October. After he got this guitar, I badgered my parents and said, 'I want one, I want one.' I got a little guitar, that I still remember quite well."

Initially Chris learned everything "second hand" from his brother. Both he and his brother were playing nylon string acoustic guitars. Chris said, "He was always into acoustic stuff. Neither one of us have either been into electric stuff that much. He was old enough to go to the folk clubs, so he would go there and come back with all of the things that he had sort of memorized. And then I would learn them off of him." Other than a very short "electric phase" when he was 16 or 17 years old, Chris has always played the acoustic guitar.

When Chris first started he learned to play fingerstyle with his thumb and three fingers (no finger picks). But he says, "I was also sort of playing a flatpick style, but without a flatpick. I would put my thumb behind my index finger and I used the nail of my index finger to pick with. But I was always breaking my nail, even on nylon stringed guitars. It wasn't until I was about 15 years old that a friend at school said, 'You know I think you can get a thing that you can hold.' I didn't know. That weekend I went to the music store and they had this big tray of plectrums. I bought one of those and I have not put it down since. I hardly ever play fingerstyle now."

When asked about his early influences, Chris said, "I remember that there were two records that I got that I sat down and completely ripped off. One was by a guy named Davy Graham and it was an album called *Folk, Blues and Beyond*. Bearing in mind when it was made (1963), it is just a fantastic record. I still have it. I remember listening to that and saying 'Wow, this is it!' The other record was *Down Home* by Chet Atkins, which my sister bought me for my tenth birthday."

In addition to learning the fingerstyle licks on these two albums, Chris said that he was a huge Beatles fan. He remembers, "The new Beatles records were always released on a Friday. I'd save up my pocket money, buy the record on Saturday, and have learned the tunes by Sunday. That is what I used to do. So, a lot of the guitar solos that I learned on my nylon string guitar using my index fingernail as a flatpick were George Harrison solos from Beatles records."

A little while after learning how to play with an actual pick, Chris got his first steel string guitar. He said, "That made a big difference. And it wasn't too far after that that I heard Clarence White. I heard him on a record and I didn't have any idea who he was. I was playing with a band, actually, and we were playing in this nightclub in the north of England. They decided that they were going to put on acoustic bands every once in a while. I was playing with this group and the DJ there, rather than playing a rock and roll track at the end of the night put on this acoustic record that someone had given him. It was actually *Don't Give Up Your Day Job*. The song he played was "Huckleberry Hornpipe." I remember it like it was yesterday. I was packing up the gear and I suddenly heard this fiddle playing. I thought 'Well, that is nice.' Then all of the sudden came Clarence's solo. I thought 'What on earth is this!' I had never heard anything like it in my life. I went over to the DJ and said 'What is that?' He said, 'It is this thing here' and he actually gave me the record. I still have it."

Chris took the record home and started learning Clarence White solos, starting with "Huckleberry Hornpipe." Chris played the recording for a friend who had a great record collection. His friend was not only familiar with Clarence, but had several Kentucky Colonels recordings. He also told Chris that he ought to listen "to this guy called Doc Watson." Chris said, "I though this was fantastic. There was something going on in America that I ought to know about! My friend said, 'Well, while you're at it…' and he started pulling out records by Norman Blake and all these people that I had never heard of. It was amazing. He made me a load of cassettes and for ages I would listen

to these tapes and it was always something stupendous. I heard the Clarence White recording and thought, 'this guy is really one off.' Then I found out that there really were a ton of these guys out there and that it was quite a thing [laughs]."

Chris has never "had a real job," having always made his living playing the guitar. When asked about the kind of music that he has played, he said, "It has been a variety with a capital 'V'." He has done everything from folk, blues, jazz, swing, to commercial music. He has backed up everyone from commercial singers, to comedians, to Celtic performers, to bluegrass fiddler Richard Greene and played in small clubs to huge theaters.

Although Chris achieved a great deal of success playing the guitar professionally during the early part of his career, in about 1985 he reach a point where he decided "he'd rather play interesting music than pursue interesting pay checks." He immersed himself in traditional Irish and Scottish music and in 1988 began touring with Irish harpist Maire Ni Chathasaigh. Chris said that he discovered Celtic music in very much the same way he discovered Clarence White and bluegrass. He remembers, "I was playing in a bar in Belgium in the seventies and during the break a guy put on a record on the house system and it was this fantastic music. It was an Irish band called Planxty. It was the first time I'd heard Irish music played in that way. I went on and bought the records and started playing the tunes. So, I'd been playing Irish music along with the records, but never playing out. When I started with Maire it involved an enormous amount of work for me to get the style nailed. There is nothing particularly complicated about the tunes, but all of the triplets and ornaments are tough to get right. It is question of feeling your way. You have to know where to put the triplets, cuts, and rolls to give it the right feel. It is really a bit of a minefield."

Because the "feel" of the music is not something that can be written down and studied through a book, Chris said that he had to listen to a lot of flute and fiddle players. He said, "There is a great recording made by a lady named Mary Bergin who is just the greatest tin whistle player on the planet. I couldn't believe the range of different sounds coming out of this tin whistle. What I did was record this album at 15 rps and then slowed it down to seven-half, then three and three quarters. That way I could dissect the ornaments. I then tried to adapt that to guitar. Of course, working with Maire was great because she knows that stuff inside out and backwards. She'd say, 'No, not there!' I'd say, 'Why not?' She'd say, 'I don't know. You just shouldn't.' " [laughs]

When Chris and Maire first began working together, they started with her repertoire. She made a tape, and Chris learned the tunes. He says that he listened to the tape over and over and over and learned how to adapt her harp tunes to the guitar. Since then he says that they later began to incorporate other kinds of music, like swing jazz, that made her work a bit harder to adapt to the harp. Today Chris and Maire's repertoire incorporates a wide variety of music from swing, to bluegrass, to Irish and Scottish music. They continue to tour extensively in Europe, Australia, and the United States.

Because Chris did not start out his musical career playing Irish music, and because he had such a wide and diverse background prior to playing Irish music, *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* conducted the following interview with Chris regarding the technical aspects of learning Irish music on guitar.

What would you recommend to flatpickers who wanted to incorporate more Irish music into their playing style?

To be honest, the first thing you do is just listen, and don't try to listen to just guitar players because there aren't that many. Listen to flute players, fiddle players, and harp players. The next thing they could do is to enroll in some kind of summer school like the Milwaukee Irish Fest Summer School or the Gaelic Roots at Boston College.

I know that you have taught at these schools yourself. What kind of things do you teach and what kind of players do you find are attending your classes?

I had a half-a-dozen people in my group and they were all intermediate to advanced players. They were all pretty decent players, playing with flatpicks and coming from the bluegrass end of things. They wanted

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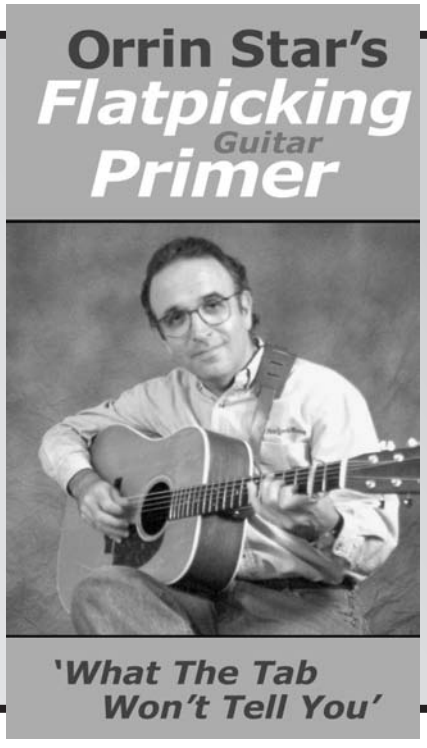

to learn how to apply what they do into the Irish/Scottish context. We spent a lot of time working on the rhythm of things and working to learn where you should put the triplet and where you shouldn't put it.

Do you find that people coming from a bluegrass context have trouble getting into the rhythm of Irish music?

They very often have trouble with jigs. Reels are similar to something like "Blackberry Blossom" so they don't usually have trouble with reels. But when you get them started on 6/8 tunes or 9/8 tunes they have a lot of trouble just getting their head around the idea. It is just a different thing.

Is there a way that you have found that helps students overcome that difficulty?

Just simply by example. Just getting them playing it. Sooner or later the penny drops. You see people struggling and trying really hard and all of the sudden it is like "Ahh!" Once you get the rhythm right with the right hand, when it comes to playing the tunes it actually becomes easy and where you put all the ornaments will become more evident if you have got the rhythm right in the first place. If you try and learn the tunes with all of the ornaments before you get the rhythm right, you are banging your head against a wall.

When I do these classes I spend a lot of time doing straight technical stuff as well. I know my left hand technique is pretty good, but I know that there are lots of ways that I can improve it. One thing I can do, within five minutes of watching someone, is to tell him or her "what you really should be working on is this."

Do you spend time in the workshops watching the students play and then offering some suggestions regarding their technique?

Absolutely. If you have 25 people in a group it is harder to do that. But I will try to do it whenever I can.

Tell us about your instructional book.

There are a lot of technical exercises in there. It is aimed at the intermediate-to-advanced level student. The exercises have the dots and tab and under the tab I also included the fingerings. That is the thing that took me the most time, but it was important because a lot of these tunes, especially the Scottish tunes, have got fantastic jumps, like three-octave arpeggios. If you finger them properly, they are not particularly difficult, but if you don't finger them properly you've got no chance at all.

Is the book all Irish and Scottish music?

No, quite a lot of the tunes I made up myself. It originally started out as an aid to workshops so that I could have some hard-copy to give out to people for the technical stuff. Then someone suggested that I write some tunes out as well.

When you say "technical stuff," what are you referring to?

Finger exercises, loads and loads of them…mostly left hand positioning things because that is where people generally fall down. I used to work with a guitar player years ago, we did little swing jazz gigs together. He was a really good singer and a decent player. He was a very musical player and had great ideas for solos, but he could never play them because he didn't have the technical facility. It was really sad because I'd be sitting with him and we'd swap leads and he'd play some solo. You could see where he was going and it was really nice, but then it would just fall down. I used to say to him, "If you would just spend a little bit of time on technique anything you want to play is going to be possible."

I don't want you to get the impression that all I am concerned with is technique, but without the basic technique you will do nothing. With this pal of mine it was really sad because it is really easy to teach someone technique. There is nothing magical about it; you basically sit down and just do it and you will improve. But it is almost impossible to teach someone how to be musical. You get people that are fantastic technicians, they can play anything, but they are boring players. It is clean as a whistle, but it is boring. I can think of a million people I've heard like that. This pal of mine was a fantastically musical player, which is the tough bit, but he didn't have the technical ability. I used to say, "You really should do it. It is criminal not to!" He'd say, "Well I can't be bothered with technique" and so he'd stumble away. It is a real shame.

What would you describe as the difference between Irish tunes and Scottish tunes?

Not huge actually. There are certain

types of tunes, like strathspeys, that appear in Scotland and not in Ireland. It all comes down to the ornamentation. The Irish tunes tend to be more heavily ornamented. But even then, that is a generalization because it depends on which part of Ireland you are talking about. There is a definite difference, say, in people from Donegal and people from Claire. The further north you get in Ireland, the more like Scottish music it becomes, which is not really surprising.

When you talk about knowing when and when not to use ornamentation, does that come down to an experience-and-feel thing?

Exactly. As far as I'm aware, no one has ever written it down. For me I had a good mentor in Maire because we'd be sitting at home practicing something and she'd say, "No, you can't do that!" The first few times I'd say, "Well, why not?" After a while you can sort of just tell when it is right. I would recommend that anyone interested in learning that sort of thing listen to fiddle players and flute players.

The other thing I tell people at workshops is that the guitar is fairly new to all this. I mean it is a relatively recent addition. It isn't a traditional instrument. A guitar player's role in that kind of thing is really as a rhythm instrument first and a harmonic instrument second.

I have played with a lot of fiddle players and flute players and I know full well that if a tune is in D, for example, and you start the B part in D or if you start it in Bm and then turn it around different ways depending on where the melody is, the person you are accompanying will not care one hoot. But if you get the rhythm wrong, they will go completely nuts and absolutely hate it. As long as they have that strong rhythm, that is all they are interested in. To evidence this you only have to listen to any recordings made in the 1920s and 1930s by fiddle players like James Morrison or Michael Coleman. They made these incredible fiddle recordings but they were always accompanied by the worst piano player that you have ever heard in your life. But all they wanted behind them was this very percussive "bash-crash" on the piano. They couldn't care less that the guy was completely playing the wrong chords. You listen to any recordings from that time period and you will find Hapless Harry on the piano! It will just make your teeth ache.

Since there are not too many lead guitar players in Irish and Scottish music, do you find that other musicians will typically want you to stay in a rhythm role when you get together to jam?

Absolutely. It is one of the reasons I don't play sessions in pubs and things like that. Sessions in pubs on guitar playing Irish and Scottish music is the most boring job in the world. I've got no objection at all to playing rhythm all night. I actually enjoy doing that. But playing rhythm to eight fiddle players who are all trying to play louder than you, I can't be bothered. I hate all that and avoid it like the plague. But in a good situation with a couple of other musicians, especially if you are the only guitar or only chord player there, is great fun.

In terms of lead guitar work in the Irish music genre, who would you recommend that people listen to?

Arty McGlynn is somebody you really ought to listen to because he has been doing it for a long time and he is a terrific player. He really is very good. He has been on a million records.

If you have the opportunity to listen to Chris Newman play the guitar live or on CD, you ought to treat yourself to it. He is also a talented instructor. *Adventures with a Flatpick*, his book of tunes, tips, and technical advice, was published by Old Bridge Music in 2001 (www.oldbridgemusic.com). If you are looking for a challanging study that will greatly improve your technical skill (right and left hand), this is a great book to add to your guitar library.

Chris is principal guitar tutor to Newcastle University's Folk Music degree course and is much in demand at summer schools. In the past few years Chris has been a guitar instructor at Steve Kaufman's Flatpicking Kamp in Maryville, Tennessee; at Milwaukee's Irish Fest Summer School; and at Boston College's famed Gaelic Roots.

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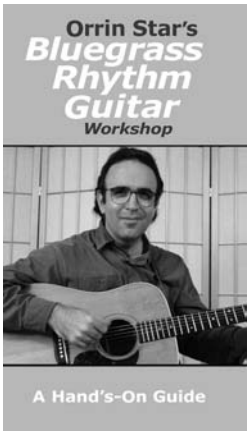
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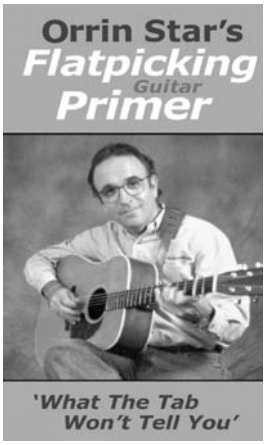

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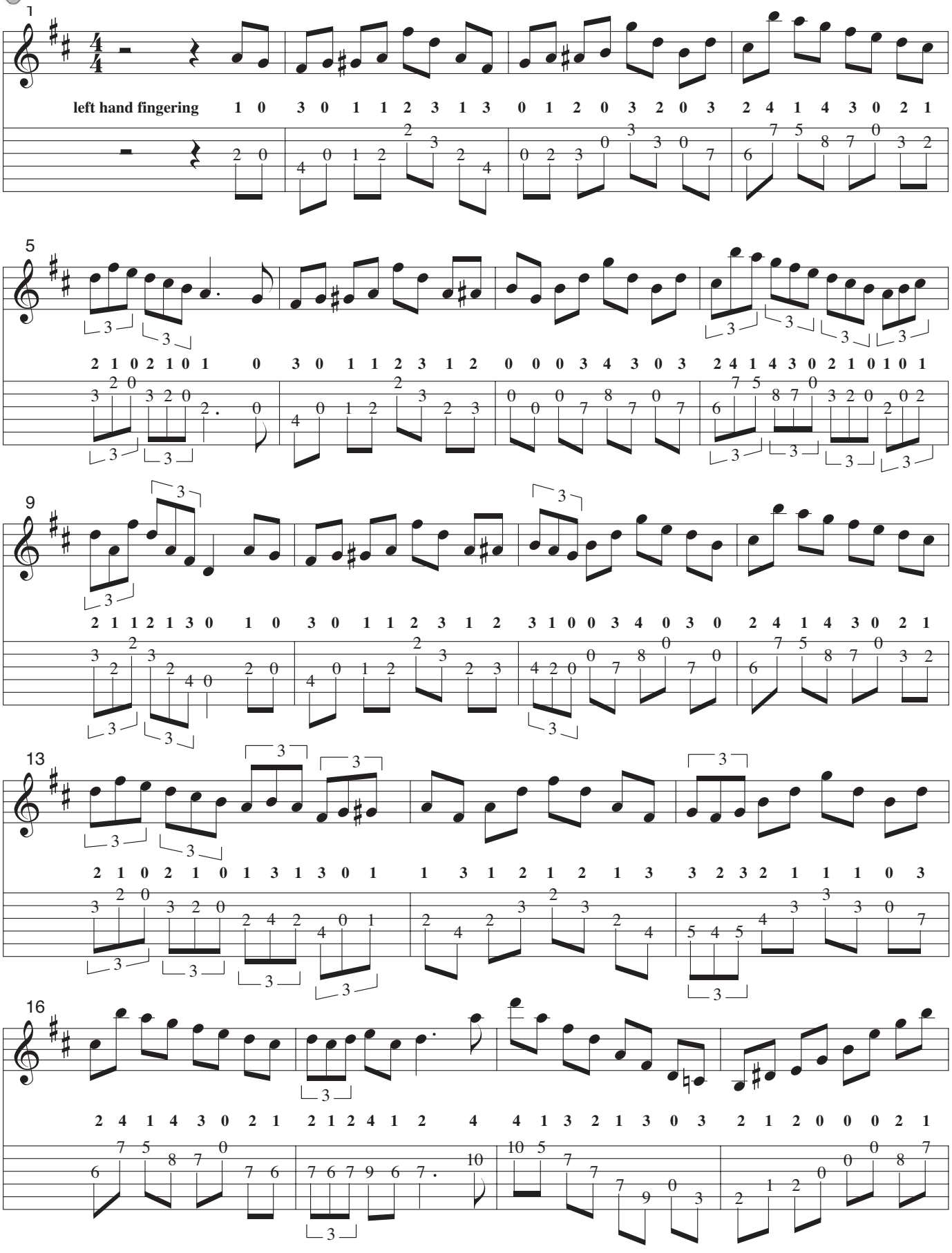
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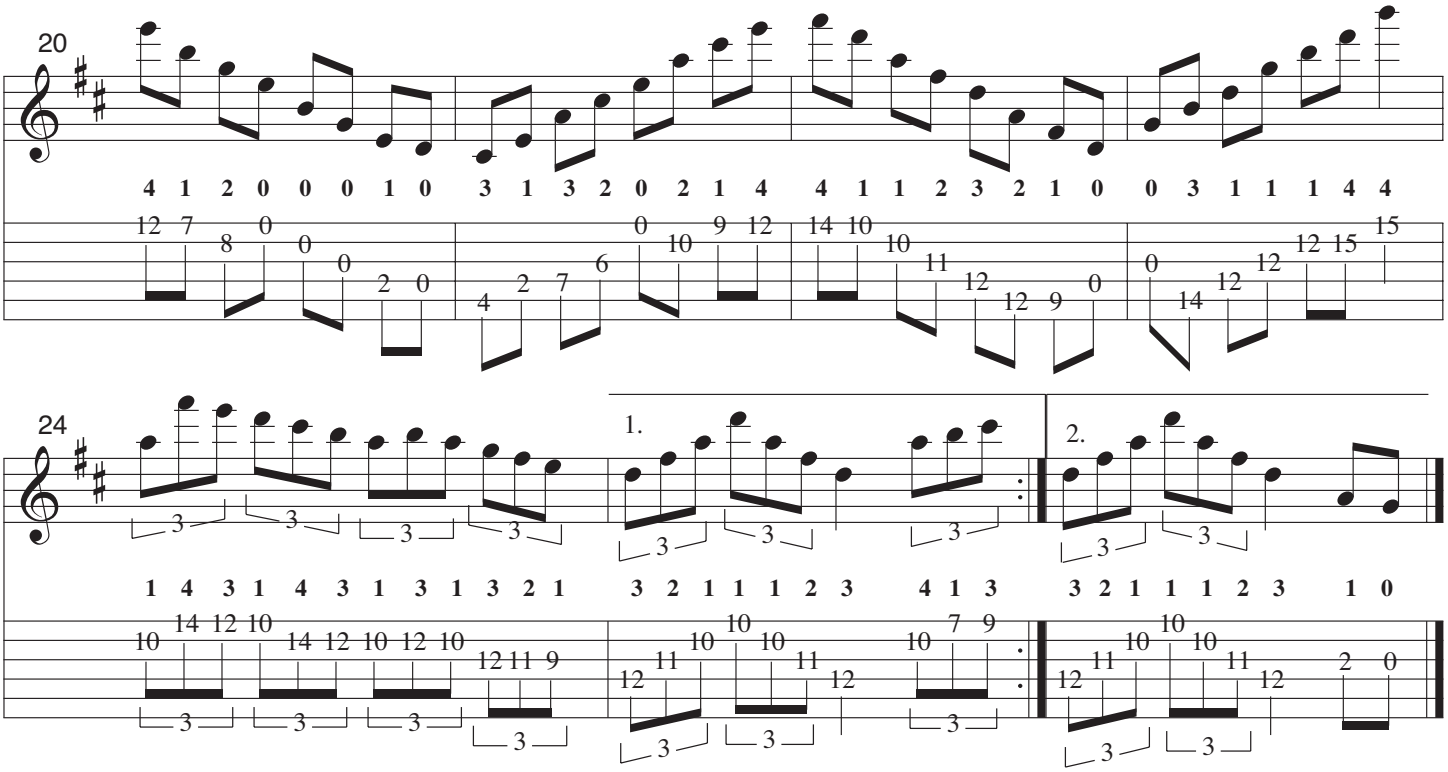

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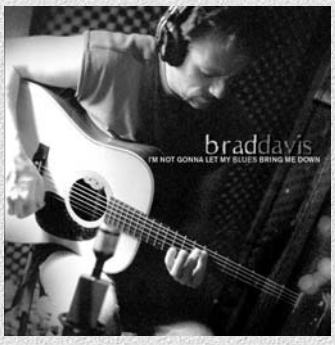

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Flatpick Profile:
Tony McManus

by Dan Miller

In 2002, I arrived at Steve Kaufman's Flatpicking Kamp a few days after the classes and concert series had already begun. As I approached different friends and acquaintances to say hello and ask how the camp was going I discovered that in almost every conversation I got asked the same question, "Have you heard Tony McManus!?" The Scottish guitar player was making his debut at the camp that year and was definitely capturing the attention of the students. After I got the chance to hear him play, it became evident what all of the buzz was about. I caught up with Tony one afternoon in the camp cafeteria where he was having lunch with Dan Crary and Beppe Gambetta. When I approached the table Dan and Beppe both suggested that the man they were sitting with, Tony McManus, was someone to be featured in *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*. I'd already had my sights set on that objective and conducted an interview with Tony that very evening.

Tony McManus grew up in Paisley, near Glasgow, Scotland. The first instrument he attempted to learn was the violin. He took lessons at school starting at the age of seven and says, "I was absolutely atrocious. I'm left handed, so I'm glad I started with violin lessons because I played right-handed and then learned to play the guitar right-handed because I was used to fingering with my left hand. My left hand was OK on the fiddle. My intonation was good. But I could not bow to save my life."

When Tony was nine, his father bought him a mandolin and he started to learn to play jigs and reels on that. "But," he says, "what I always wanted was a guitar. I got one when I was ten and that was that. I was obsessed." Since Tony was already playing the mandolin with a pick, he said that it seemed natural to do that with a guitar as well. However, he also started learning how to play the guitar fingerstyle because "there were loads of kids at school playing guitars and they weren't playing with picks. So it seemed equally natural to play with fingers as to play with a pick. I grew up doing both."

The music Tony began learning when he started the guitar was traditional gigs and reels. "That was the music I wanted to play. That was the music I grew up with and that is what inspired me. At the time there was virtually no one doing it. I was obsessed with the acoustic guitar, but there was no one who could channel me in any direction. There was no one to say, 'You should listen to John Renbourn, or Norman Blake, or Doc Watson.' So I grew up completely ignorant of all of it. The only music I was playing was traditional music that I heard on recordings."

Most of the traditional music Tony was listening to was coming out of Ireland. "At that time" he explains, "I think that the music coming out of Ireland was a bit more creative than what was happening in Scotland. There are probably people who would kill me for saying that. Or maybe I just didn't hear the right stuff coming out of Scotland. I mean, listening back to bands like Silly Wizard I can now see that tremendous music was happening in Scotland, but I wasn't aware of it. I grew up listening almost exclusively to Irish music and that is what I played up until the last ten years or so. I moved back to Scotland about ten years ago [after a five-year stay in England] determined to play music for a living. At first I moved to Glasgow, but then went to Edinburgh because the music scene seemed more vibrant there. There seemed to be a bit of a change in Scottish music. It was much more confident. It was not remotely derivative of what was happening in Ireland. There were lots of new trends and currents happening in Scottish music that I had never been aware of and was very happy to discover. So it was great when I hooked up with Alisdair Fraser because his knowledge of the Scottish fiddle repertoire is second to none."

When asked about the difference between Scottish and Irish music, Tony says, "They are very different traditions. The Scottish tradition is much more of a documented body of work. It is not the same kind of classic oral folk tradition. It didn't quite work like that, except for maybe in the West Highlands, but not in central Scotland where you had composers. Those guys left enormous legacies of dusty books. And therein the tradition resides. In general you would find that even traditional musicians in Scotland are very musically literate. And the bag-piping tradition…no one learns the pipes by ear because it is such a technical endeavor. The Irish tradition is classically that you learn at the master's feet and you use your ear until you get it. The music itself has a lot in common and even specific tunes have swapped backwards and forwards. I always regard myself as being very lucky in that no one told me when I was starting to play guitar that I should either play fingerstyle or with a flatpick so I ended up doing both. The other stroke of luck was having a foot in both Ireland and Scotland. It was only two generations ago that my father's folks were in the north of Ireland, so I have a handle on both cultures which is a very fortunate place to be."

Tony went on to say that musically there are different rhythms that occur in Scottish music giving 2/4 marches and the staccato strathspey as examples. "If these tunes happen in Ireland, it happens in Donegal in the far north west because Scottish workers went over there and brought the tunes with them. Local Irish workers picked them up and so they became Irish tunes. So you will find strathspeys in Donegal, but it is very much a Scottish rhythm."

Tony started playing lead solos on traditional tunes right away. When questioned about the role of the guitar being mainly one of rhythm at that time, he answers, "I wasn't playing out at sessions, I was too young to go to the pub. I was playing at home for my own amusement. I think Paul Brady was the first one I heard playing tunes on the guitar and I thought it was fantastic. And that was flatpicking…probably not as the term would be understood in North America [laughs], but it was acoustic guitar played with a flatpick. I just thought it was phenomenal."

Tony states that his next major influence on guitar was Arty McGlynn. "Arty did a whole album of it called *McGlynn's Fancy* and I heard that probably when I was still in my teens and that just blew me away. I thought it was the most incredible guitar playing. Arty is one of my major, major influences. The stuff that he is known for in the traditional music circles is a fraction of what goes on in his head." Even though Tony had a few influences (like Brady and McGlynn), for the majority of the early years of his guitar-playing career Tony mainly played by himself for his own amusement and thus both his flatpicking and fingerpicking styles are somewhat unique.

When asked about how he determines whether or not he will choose to use a flatpick or fingerstyle on a particular tune, he says, "It is very hard to play fingerstyle guitar in a big ensemble. But beside that, there is no real formula. When I play solo I will mostly play fingerstyle because it is easier to accompany yourself. When I play with Alisdair Fraser it is a mixture of both. Alisdair is a very versatile fiddle player and there is no ego involved. He can quite happily drop back and play double-stops and I can take the tune, either flatpicking or fingerstyle. My choice is based on what feels better in that tune. There is one set of reels that we do that starts out with very gentle fingerstyle and by the end of it I'm tearing the guts out of the guitar with a pick. So it can change. I start with the pick in my mouth and I have to grab it very quickly, so it is a tricky set to play. The other thing I have to do is shift the capo from fret five to fret three in the middle of the tune without changing the rhythm!"

Tony says that his flatpicking "style" was predominantly derived from listening to other instruments. "Most of the ornamentation that has informed the way I play the guitar is derived from other instruments. I will do things with my left hand that a fiddle player would do. I don't really remember at any stage thinking 'oh, that would sound

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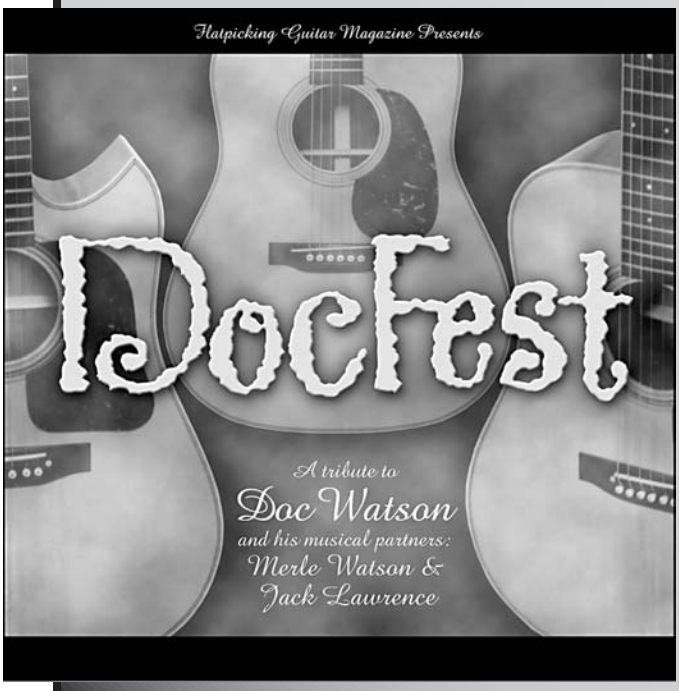

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good on the guitar.' I just hear 'that is how that tune is played, that is how that tune sits within the idiom.' To me most of it is instinctive because I was breast-fed on the stuff. I have never analyzed it."

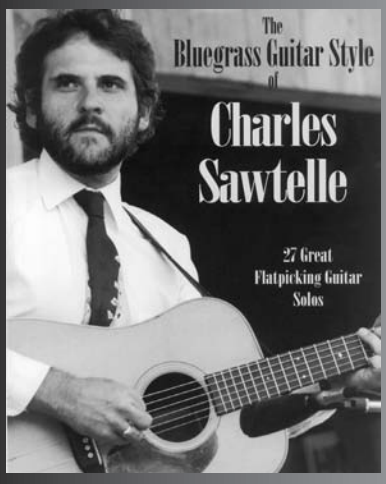
Having grown up without the influence of American style flatpickers, Tony says, "I am just now becoming aware of the things that I do that are different from the classic American flatpicking. Things that to me seem completely natural, like playing triplets, is derived from me listening to tenor banjo players and thinking, 'That will work on guitar.' It seems like rocket science here. Whereas I find that when backing someone playing 'Blackberry Blossom' and it comes around to my turn and they say 'Take a break' and you start improvising—that doesn't happen where I come from. There are major differences between jamming where I come from and jamming here. No matter how big the session is at home, no one ever says to the guitar player, 'Take a break.' It just doesn't happen. At home, if you know the tune, you play it, and if you don't, you sit out. And you don't take turns to feature each person. Everybody plays the melody at the same time and the guitar drives the rhythm."

Although he says that his flatpicking technique is different from that of the American flatpickers like Doc Watson or Dan Crary, Tony says that it is hard to say exactly how it differs. "They probably know the neck of the guitar better than I do. I don't always flatpick in standard tuning. I quite often flatpick in DADGAD, which seems to be kind of unusual because DADGAD is almost always associated with fingerstylists. So I used alternate tunings more than your classical American flatpicker would. I do things with the pick that seem bizarre to even Dan Crary. Like playing triplets—I will play a downstroke on the G string and then upstroke on the G string followed by an upstroke on the D string (down-up-up). When you drag the pick back across you get 'da-da-dum,' which is a way of getting a triplet. I don't know where I got that from. Most of my technique is completely ad hoc. Sometimes I wish I had of actually studied. When I'm teaching in a room next to John Carlini, who knows more theory than I think is healthy for someone to know, I just gaze in wonderment at how anyone can carry that amount of knowledge in their head. So I regret not being trained in that sense. It is the stuff I wish I knew, and the stuff that slows me down when I get together with other musicians. On the other hand, I am very happy with this rag bag of techniques that I've wound up with because I haven't been trained."

Today Tony McManus maintains a demanding touring schedule and has recorded several projects (his first came out in 1996). When asked about the transition from playing for his own amusement to being a performer and playing to entertain others he says "I spent a lot of time in academia...far too long. I was a student in Glasgow for four years and then went down to England to do research in mathematics, of all things. It started going wrong about two years into it. I was still playing guitar, but I wasn't getting out with other people, I wasn't jamming, I was just noodling at home. When I started getting warning signs that maybe I wasn't in the right career path I took the guitar out and I knew that there was an informal session in the town where I was living in England. I took the guitar out one Sunday afternoon and I sat in and jammed with people for the first time in years. I got such a buzz out of doing it. Just the very notion of sitting with people that you don't know particularly well and bonding with them through this common currency of traditional music was really fantastic."

When touring Tony plays both as a soloist and in various ensembles. Recently he has done some touring with the Scottish fiddle player Alisdair Fraser. He also works with a bass player out of Paris (Alain Genty) and occasionally tours with a guitar player in Britany (Soig Siberil). His interest in American traditional music is being pursued in duo with old time fiddler, singer, and banjo player Bruce Molsky. Additionally, he has also recorded an album, *Men of Steel*, with Dan Crary, Beppe Gambetta, and Don Ross. The four guitar greats plan to tour in the United States this year.

Several months ago I was talking with John Jorgenson on the phone and he mentioned that during the Chet Atkins convention in Nashville Tony McManus and Tommy Emmanuel had come over to his house and the three had spent all night picking. (I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall that night!) When I asked John about Tony's guitar playing, he said "The first time I heard Tony McManus live I was captivated by his exquisite tone and the seemingly effortless beauty of his playing. He is one of those special players that can transport the listener to another time and place with his music, no matter what the situation. After meeting the man and spending time together in Italy and Tennessee I was able to see that his playing is an extension of his personality, which is warm, friendly and sincere. If you ever have the chance to go see him play, just treat yourself and do it!"



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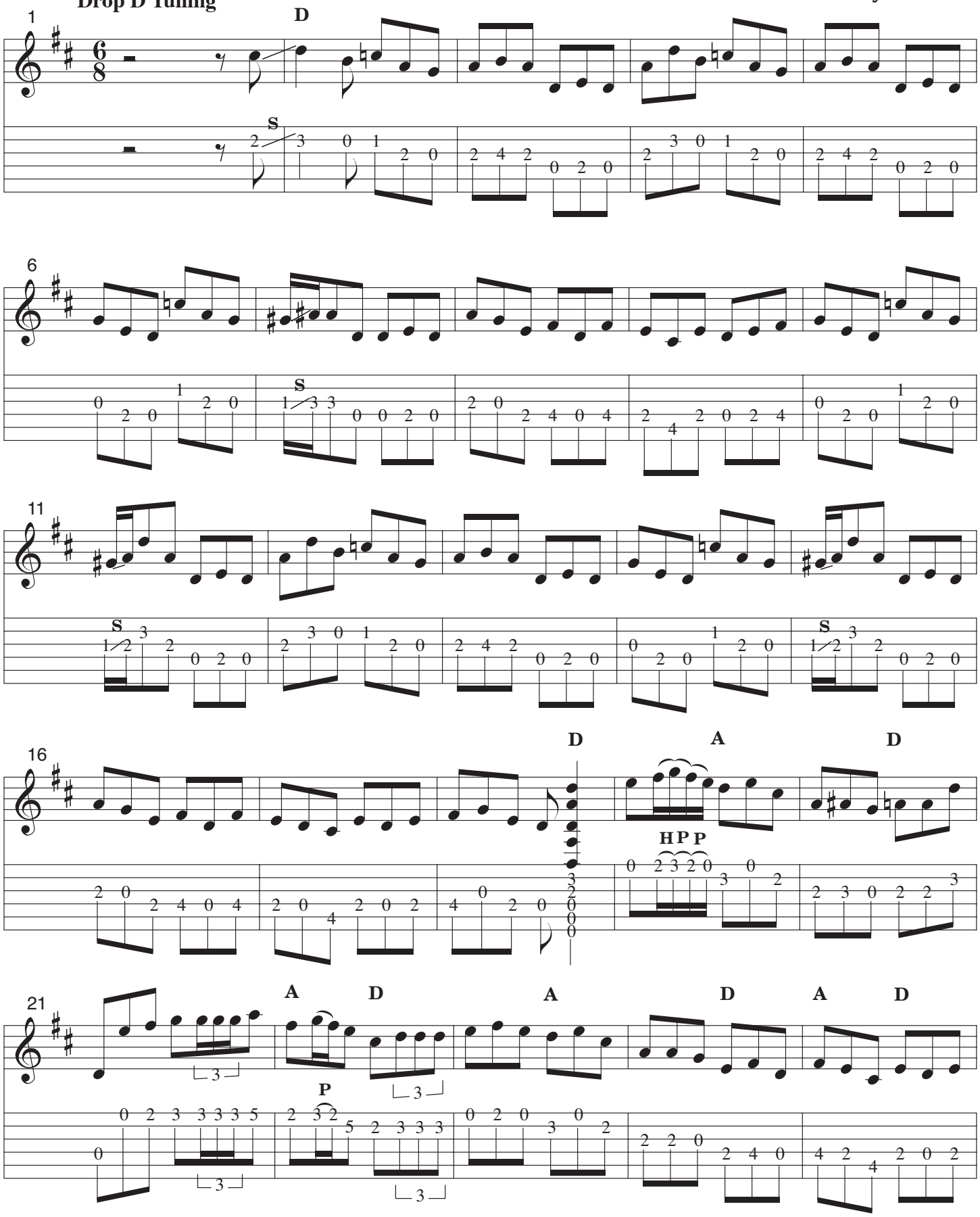
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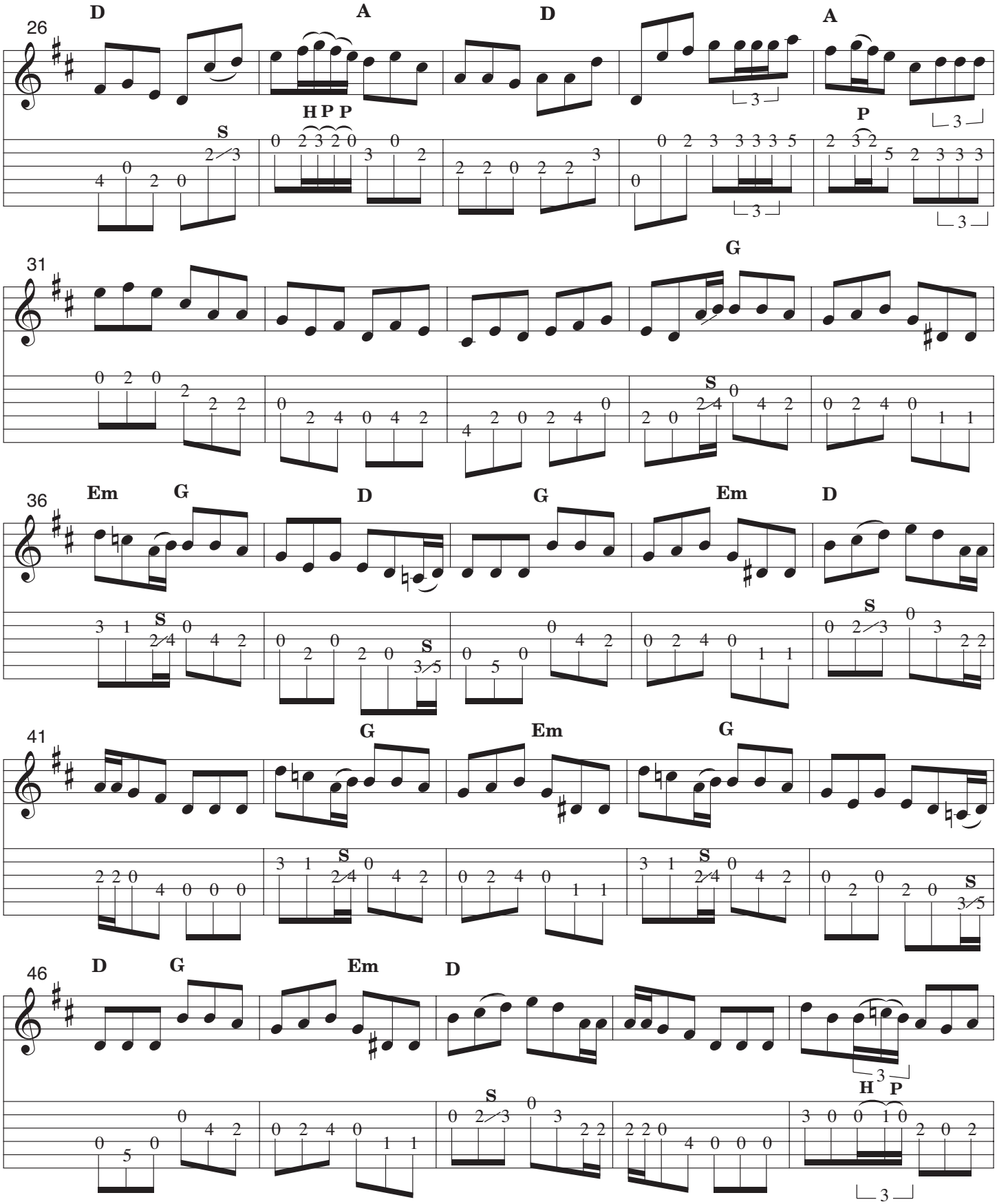
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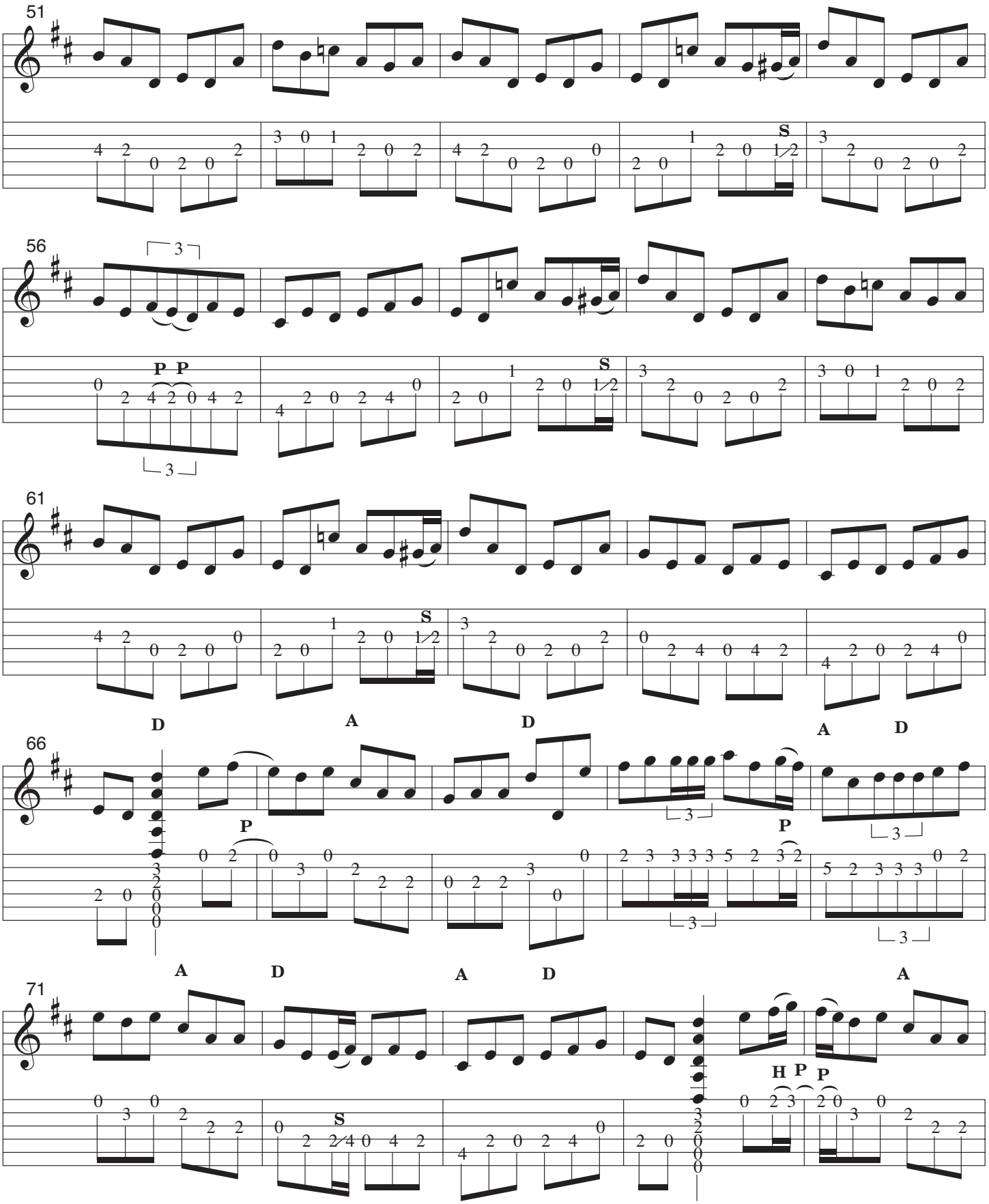
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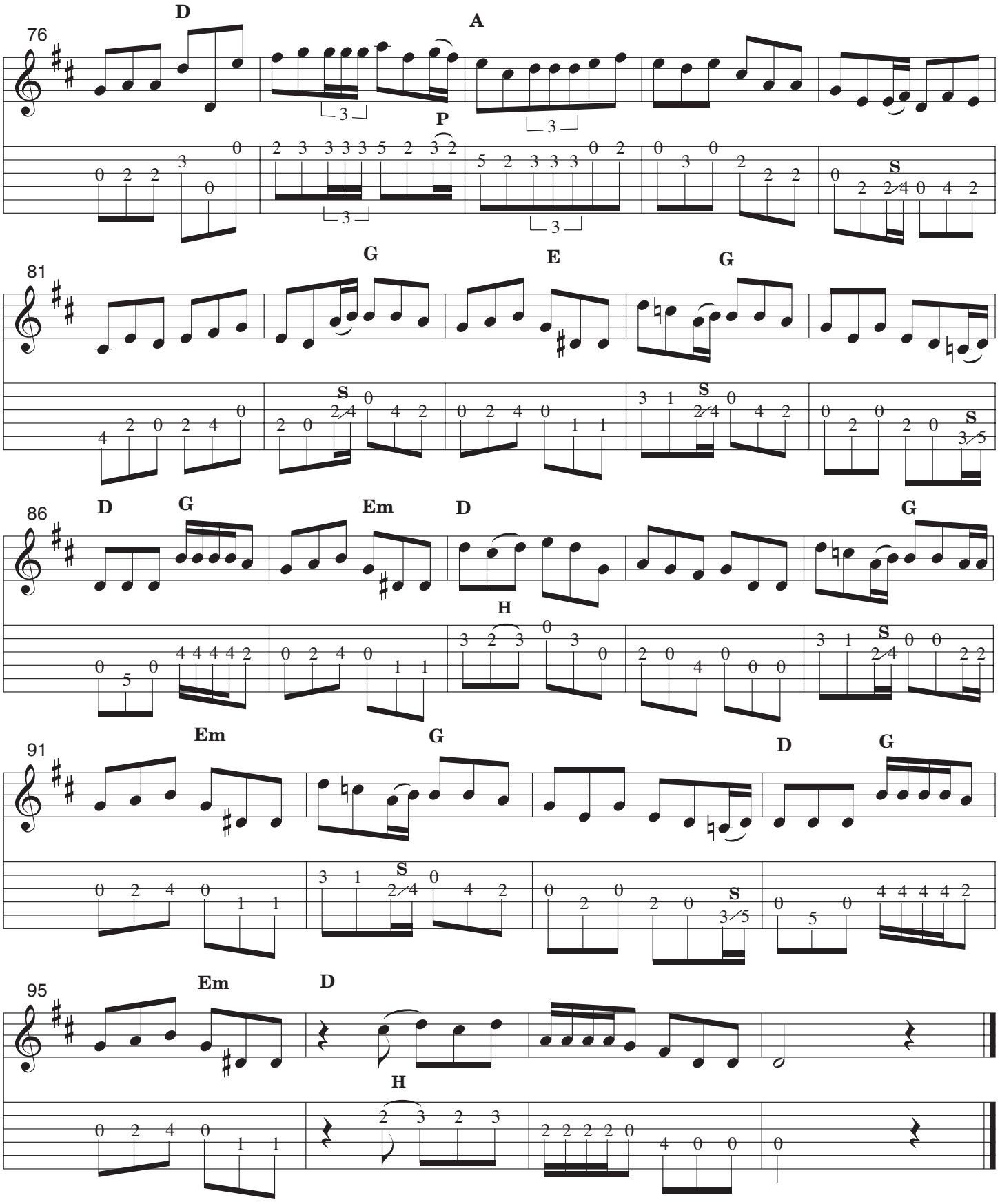
Ken Miller Guitars

by David Dugas

Tallahassee, Florida's Ken Miller is one of many instrument builders to experience national recognition in the "Golden Age of Lutherie." Although it appears as if these builders have magically appeared "out of the woodwork" to produce world-class instruments, they have in fact spent years honing their skills and craft by repairing instruments and crafting custom creations. These creations are often for local musicians and the builder relies heavily—and sometimes solely—on word-of-mouth for their recognition.

When did you build your first guitar?

I built my first guitar in 1964, which was a 12-string guitar. Back then you couldn't get 12-string guitars. That was when Guild first started making one and I hadn't found one yet. I remember it did work, but cosmetically it wasn't much to write home about, but functionally it did work and it did sound good. Probably all I really learned was that I could do all that I wanted to, to build the guitar. I learned that there were no real restrictions on me other than those that were self imposed. I'd worked with wood all my life. When I was three years old my dad would bring me wooden model kits, airplanes to build, and it never occurred to me that I could not work with wood. So I had the skills in place and it was just a matter of focusing them on instruments.

Do you build instruments other than steel string guitars?

Yes, I've built classical guitars, which was probably my first love. I've built banjos, mandolins, balalaikas, Dobros, Hawaiian guitars, a little of anything that interested me. I built other instruments because somebody would commission it, or I would think "Boy I'd love to play a so-and-so" but did not want to buy it or did not like what I saw out there. Also part of it is that some people when they want to learn something take a college course. When I want to learn something, I make something different. The thing I learned from building other instruments is refining of my skills. It gives me a better perspective of a job even though I might not want to do it that way very often or at all.

Which came first for you: classical guitars or steel string guitars?

The classical guitars came first. Actually it was Flamenco. Early on in my career when I was young and impressionable I was "attacked" by a Santos Hernandez (classical guitar). [Laughter] After all these years, I've seen a lot of guitars and I still think that one instrument is the finest guitar I've ever seen. It was in hideous shape. You could see daylight through it from 7 or 8 different directions, but what a sound! The action was lower than any steel string I've played, it didn't rattle any where. It was just an awesome instrument. Since then I've always looked for a Santos instrument when I can find them. I take him as my #1 hero though of course there are several others on my list.

Building classical guitars helped me make what I think is prettier and cleaner steel string guitar. I'm not starting with an ornate instrument, such as a D-45 style instrument. I'm starting with a "Santos Hernandez Flamenco" guitar, which is very plain.

At the same time building steel strings brings in that crispness that a good steel string has and allows me to try and put that into the classical guitars, so that they are alive even though we are using nylon strings. My design ethic of my steel strings guitars is very conservative. As a matter of fact, I'd like to compare my design ethic with Martin's before 1880. My classical guitars tend to be a little bit more Latin American than Spanish in design and use of color, but my design for classical guitars is Santos Hernandez in the 1930s.

I build with spruce for the top wood. I don't build with cedar or redwood or whatever else is in style at the moment. I prefer spruce because it keeps getting better forever. If somebody puts love and music in it, it will grow and sound better and better. My experience with redwood and cedar has been "what you see is what you get." I really don't think they improve the way spruce does. They will play in, but there are Stradivarius violins that are four hundred years old now and they are still getting better.

I use red spruce (Adirondack). The reason is that is there are two spruces out there that I really think are top and that's German spruce and red spruce. I can't get the German in the quantity and the quality that I want, but I can get the quantity and quality of the red spruce I want. I feel that the face wood is something that you have to learn, that you have to grow into, so I have arbitrarily decided that I would learn and work with spruce. I don't tap my plates and say "this is a Bb or an F or whatever." I do tap and wiggle them and such, but I think what I'm doing is something that's happening in the back of my brain rather than the front. I do it until it looks right and feels right and sounds right, but I can't tell you that I do that to this note or that amount of flex. It's a balancing act that seems to work for me.

Can you provide construction details of your instruments and your construction philosophy?

I build light. My guitars are demonstrably lighter than almost any of the factory guitars. I may be a quarter lighter than a Martin.

Externally, I like the entire instrument to be one work of art. Much like a classical, I

don't want the fingerboard to be so gaudy that it's the piece of art, not a guitar, or the peghead or any other part of the instrument. I don't want one part of the instrument to detract from another part. I'm fundamentally against D-45s, but I have seen some pearl inlaid Martin's from the 1800s that were just gorgeous. They were more elegant than the stuff we've seen in the past 10 or so years from Martin.

I'm not seeking perfection in my instrument, I'm seeking elegance. I think factories do perfection and in theory hand builders do elegance.

The thing the classical players have recognized from early on is that the handmade instrument tends to have more personality and the factory made instrument tends to have less personality. Of course the drawback is that you can get a personality that doesn't mesh with you, but if you get one that does mesh with you it will drag you kicking and screaming into a higher level of musicianship! [Laughter]

I keep the insides of my guitars really clean. I don't scallop the braces. I make relatively smooth tapers and depending on where I feel the wood is too stiff or too loose, I'll make them smaller or larger, but I don't scallop them in the Martin or Gibson tradition.

I use non-kerfed linings on the inside, which to my way of thinking makes a better echo chamber. I think the slots in the kerfing are almost sound proofing the guitar and interfering with the transmission of the sound. It also makes for a cleaner job. There again, that's a holdover from the classical thing.

I don't use tape on the sides of my guitars. I use wood bracing on the sides. For the center strip and the side bracing I use the same wood as the back and the sides. First of all, it looks prettier and second, I figure they are going to wiggle because they are hardwoods and if you use the same type woods they will hopefully wiggle in sympathy and not cause trouble. [Laughter] I say "wiggle" because hardwoods always move.

I spent 10 years as a tool-and-die maker when I was doing less instrument stuff and having that kind of experience just opens up your mind to the possibilities when you have a problem that normally wouldn't be available to you. An example of this would be in relating to the guitars would be making jigs and fixtures. Doing the machine work showed me when those could be valuable and also when they could be a hindrance.

I worked for Guild Guitars when they were in Westerly, Rhode Island and it was a really neat experience to learn all the tricks of the trade from the factory point of view. Although most of that stuff doesn't really connect with what I do myself, but having the knowledge helps me to make better decisions about what I'm doing. How to make jigs, what kinds of jigs the big guys are using.

One of the things we do that's different than many other builders is we use a volute on the back of the peghead that's similar to the old Gibson banjos as well as a layer of veneer on the back of the peghead to seal off all that end grain. The combination of the two adds a lot of strength to the neck for your "knock it over syndrome" and it looks classy too!

I am using a varnish finish on my steel strings as well as on classical guitars. I use a dovetail neck joint. I've used others, but it works for me and I like it. I don't use a Popsicle brace, but I do use struts that go from the neck block that go from the first ladder brace, much like Stu Mossman did. It keeps the 14th fret from sliding in on the soundhole. I've never had that problem in one of my guitars, but I've repaired many guitars that did!

I use an X-brace similar to a Martin, but I don't use Martin's lap joint. The brace that I use goes over to the bass side is a third lower than the brace that goes over to the treble side. The idea behind this is that there is great structural function and better sound transmission than the standard X-brace.

I use a standard 1 ¾" nut width with steel string and I use a round neck shape like a Les Paul neck. I really feel it's the best shape ergonomically because it fits your hand better. As you move your hand around, you don't have to reposition your thumb because of a flat spot or a V. All of the neck dimensions are up to the customer's preferences.

On my setups, I use very little relief in the neck. I set it up to be about 4 or 5 thousandths. I set the height at the 12th fret at 5/64 and 6/64, which I think is pretty much industry standard. I'm certainly willing to alter it for the playing style.

What bridge plate material are you using?

I use local dogwood for my bridgeplate material because I've found it to be harder and a little bit lighter than maple.

What kind of glue are you using?

I use hide glue on the face. Everything on the face of both classical and steel strings are glued with hide glue because it doesn't slip. For the rest of the instrument I use all of the modern glues that are available and appropriate.

Have you ever varied the soundhole size in any of your guitars?

Yes I have and what it has shown me is that the ones that have been standardized over the years is the one that works. If you make your soundhole bigger, you can get a little bit better treble response. If you make it smaller you can get a little bit better bass response, but the big boomy guitars need big soundholes to keep the bass from overpowering the things and the smaller guitars can use a smaller soundhole to make the bass work better. It all makes sense to follow what tradition has suggested has been the best way to do it.

I've experimented with soundholes in other places rather than in the middle of the I-beam. I make a Weisenborn-style guitar and I put my soundhole on the treble side and I really don't think it changed the sound because it's not interfering with the bracing pattern. If anything it would sound better on a conventional guitar because having the soundhole is, from an engineering point of view, structurally the worst place to put it, but it's traditional and I can live with that. [Laughter]

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I've noticed that the most responsive, articulate instruments that I've played feel as though the whole instrument vibrates. The backs and sides vibrate as well as the tops. You can hear them really well from the back as well as from the front. Have you noticed that?

Yes, I've noticed that too and I try to do that. I usually get them from my instruments. I don't think that I've built a "turkey," but I have built some that are spectacular and some that aren't spectacular. That's one of the reasons some folks put sound ports up on the upper bout because it shows the player that it is working.

How would you characterize the sound of your instruments?

My guitars don't sound like Martins, which I believe is a good thing. I'm trying to produce an instrument that will do anything; that you can play classical, ragtime, country, or rock and roll on. A piano will do anything and I think a good guitar should be able to do the same. So I'm trying to build instruments that everybody will think are good rather than only what the flatpickers or only the fingerpickers like.

Now, having said that, for a fingerpicker I would brace it a little lighter because they are not going to lean on the guitar quite so hard and I would probably make it with a smaller body because the fingerpickers I've dealt with want something in the neighborhood of a 000 or an OM. I do think those shapes give you a better balanced sound. The D shapes tend to be a little muddy sounding and of course I'm generalizing. Generally speaking, Martin Ds are not very good guitars unless you are doing backup work, however there are the few special ones and I've heard them and they are really great, but generally speaking it's a backup instrument. That's what it was designed to do, to back up orchestras. I think the Ds that I'm making are very well balanced, but if somebody asks my opinion I'd say go with the smaller sized guitar if you are a fingerpicker.

I guess for me the bottom line is that I can use the exact same woods as Ronnie Griffin and they will sound different and I think that is cool! I like that.

One of the things that occurs is that people will ask me to make my guitars with a square peghead, in other words "can you clone me a Martin" and my thoughts are yes I can, but why would you want me to? People that buy my guitars already own a Martin or a Taylor or a Collings or a Santa Cruz, so why not put some variety in it? Why have ten different versions of a D-18? Why not have ten different guitars that do the same thing but in different and unusual ways? When you already have your Martin and you want something that's a little bit different that will stand out in a crowd and still get the job done then you go to a custom builder. Whether it's me or someone else depends on the personal chemistry.

When you build an instrument on commission, are you able to shape the sound of the instrument to what the player wants or do you have a signature sound that you gravitate towards?

I try to shape it the way the customer wants it, but I do have a signature sound as does everybody else. Within that "signature sound" there are ways to push the sound towards what the player wants: wood thickness, air chamber, fret scale, volume, there are a million different variables. When someone orders a guitar I try and give them what they want because if you can't then why not buy a factory made instrument? The whole point of a custom instrument is that they get what they want.

Who influenced you in building your instruments?

My heroes are early Martin (1875 and back), Stu Mossman, JW Gallagher and his wife Hazel, and of course Santos Hernandez. He may not be mainstream bluegrass, but I'm sure he would have approved! [Laughter]

How many guitars have you built so far?

I've built about 75 so far. I've been building since 1962. When I started out in the 60s there was no market whatsoever for custom builders. You could sell it for $140 and the case cost $40, so I thought this is nuts! I made a different decision than Bob Taylor or Robert Ruck (classical builder) and that's OK. Now Virginia and I are at a point where we are going for it. We are year one into our five-year plan of producing a business of being a builder.

How many guitars do you build a year? Have you found that you built fewer at first then it increased over the last 5 years or so?

We decided to stop repairing guitars a year or two ago in favor of building full time, which hasn't completely occurred. We started out building one or maybe two a year, but I was doing mostly repairs. Right now I'm at 10 a year and I hope to get that up to about 24 a year. That is what I think is the maximum amount I can build with the amount of tooling I use. I don't use any CNC and I don't farm it out or do it in shop. I have nothing against it; it's just not my game. I want every guitar to be as individual as possible. I realize that's not completely possible because when I make a dozen D-shaped guitars a year they are going to be fairly similar in dimensions. I want to keep the option open to change something if I feel it needs to be thicker or thinner. The more you tool up, the more you are into production and the less you are feeling the wood and that is very important for me.

I'm really interested in building a small numbers of instruments that are going to be nifty. I'd rather have my instruments as something you don't see real often but when you do you really appreciate it.

I enjoy building my instruments one or two at a time. My goal is to enjoy building the instruments.

What is the price range for your guitars?

$2500 to $5000

What's your current waiting time?

My delivery date for new orders is over four months.

How long does it take for you to build a standard flat top with standard appointments?

It takes between 80 and 150 hours, which usually translates into about 2 ½ to 3 months.

For further information, visit Ken's website (www.kenmillerguitars.com).

Kenneth Miller
1819 Raa Avenue
Tallahassee, FL 32303

NASHVILLE FLATTOP

By Brad Davis

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Blue Irish Grass

Since the beginning of the free colonies in the new world, Irish music has influenced almost everything we hear and try to play. Many who settled in the early colonies came across the ocean from England, Scotland, Ireland, and other countries. These settlers brought their culture and music. Now ask yourself this question: "What would fiddle tunes sound like if it were not for the Irish?"

Based on my experience in listening to Irish music, I wrote the song "Lacross." Written with the Irish fiddle style in mind, it meant I had to stay far away from any blue notes or blue scales. This keeps things sounding happier and joyful, if you will (which is not to say that Irish music cannot sound sad at times, depending on the song). The tab below is written in 4/4 time. The more you listen to Irish music the more you can learn and throw into your own playing and style. Good luck and have fun.

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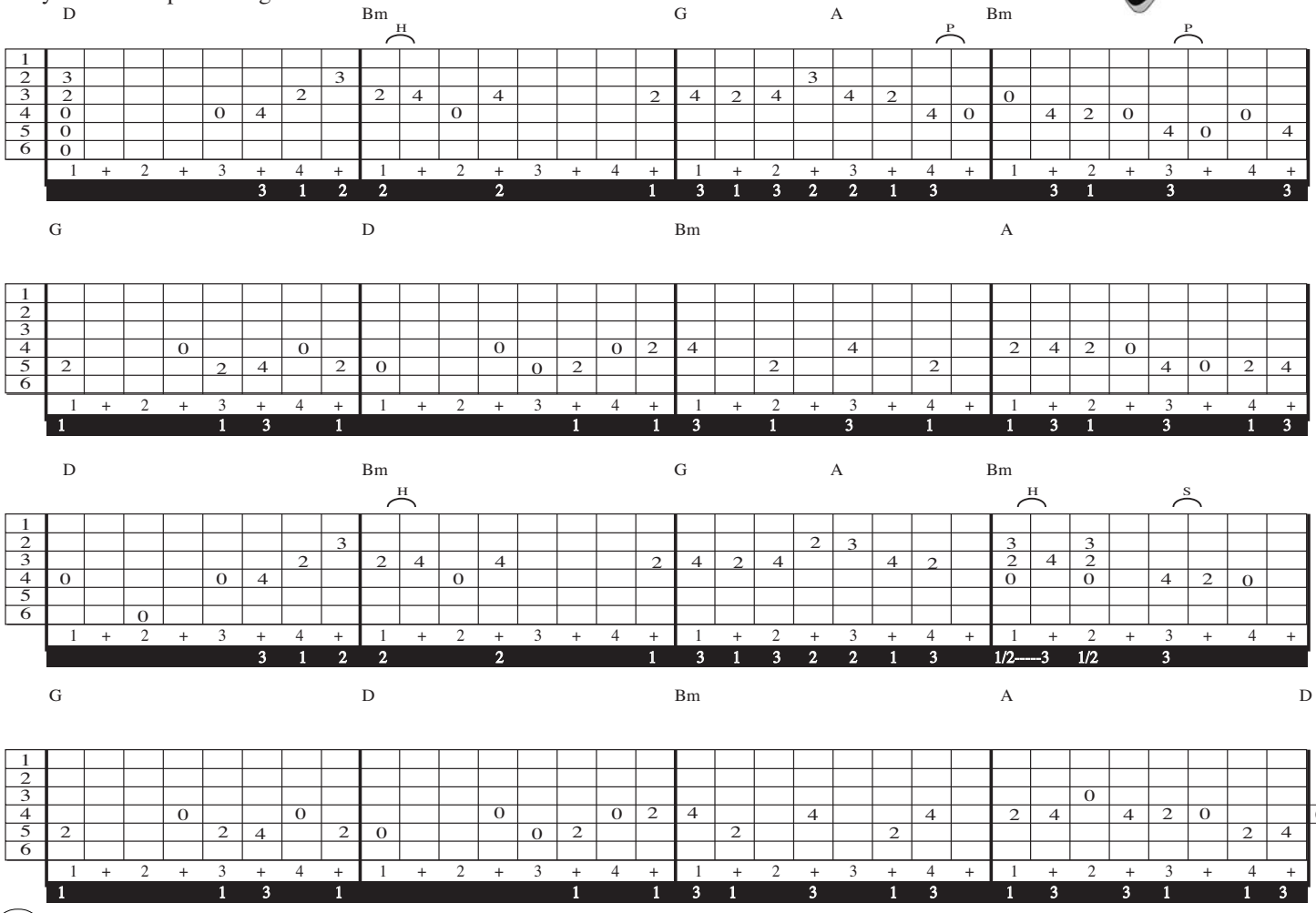
LACROSS brad davis music BMI

Key-D with drop D tuning



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Gypsy Jazz Guitar

by Paul Mehling

There's not much in the world of Gypsy jazz guitar that relates to Irish music, but in keeping with the spirit of this issue I'll offer up my best Irish joke: Did you hear about the Irish boomerang? It doesn't come back when you throw it, but it sings sad and lovely songs about returning someday.

We'll continue with the theme from our last article, covering some two-fingered things that Django would use (which caused a flood of letters inquiring about more specific details on picking).

We had discussed the first-position two-fingered chromatic scale (Fig 1). This can be done with all alternating up-and-down picking and it will work quite effectively. But for maximum speed and increased insight into the mind of M. Reinhardt, let's try adding downstrokes on every string crossing.

This will allow you to "rest" (as in "rest stroke") between each set of strings. Why pick more than you need to? So the picking pattern for the first set of strings, low E to A would be D-U-D-U-D-D with the last two downstrokes actually being one downstroke that hits both the E and the A strings. (Questions? Email me; questionsforPazzo@hcsf.com)

Try this just on those two strings (measures 1 & 2) first for a few minutes until you have the feel of it at a comfortable tempo. All of this stuff will become second nature to you in time, but for now it may seem awkward. Gradually you'll feel more confidence and comfort, which will enable you (with diligent practice) to play it lightning-fast. Someday.

Okay, now try it on the A and D strings (measures 2 & 3, Fig 1). It may start to get easier but then get harder because it's a five-note grouping with no natural rhythm to it. Is it 4/4? Is it 3/4? So, here's the solution to that problem: try it from the low E to the E on the D string at the second fret and STOP there.

Now ask yourself: is it 4/4? Is it 3 /4? It can be both! Remember that! At this point I'd recommend that you repeat this over and over until your neighbors (or your housemates) complain. As your teacher it's my duty to remind you not to bite off more than you can chew! Okay? Got this? Could you play it for someone right now? If so, you're ready to do the second octave (Fig 2). It involves one less slide on the G string going to the B (that weird interval between those two strings!) which will make it a little tricky since you won't be able to use the Down-down from the G to the B. (figure 2, end of measure 2)

Again, the picking pattern will be D-U-D-U-D-D until we get to the G string. From the E on the second fret of the D string the picking will be:
D string = D U D
G string = D U D U
B string = D U D U D
E string = D

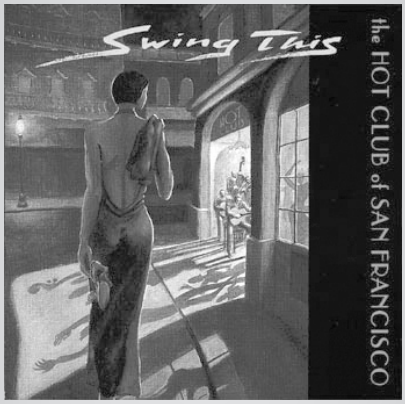
That will get you to the second octave of the E note. It's slightly different from the first octave, so let's isolate that octave for incessant practicing (let's get the neighbors to call the police) until it's easier than changing channels with a remote control.

The really good news is that this technique (called "sweep" picking) really doesn't help much when you're descending so you don't have to learn how to do it when you're going down. You can try it, and you have my blessing. Let me know if you have a breakthrough on this. There is an entire re-writing of picking technique which relies solely on this for string crossings and more and if your interested you should check out the playing and the instructional video of Frank Gambale. He's awesome and his video is compelling.

This technique can also be used for another Django device (patent pending) which involves playing the same note on two strings like this (Fig. 3) and across all five strings (Fig. 4). You could also use a tremolo for this or you could use a picking pattern borrowed from the Gypsies (previously covered in these pages) of D D U D D U. Sounds like a very rhythmic and funky tremolo! Try it, it's weird and fresh and decidedly Django.

Paul Mehling (aka Pazzo) is the leader of the notorious Hot Club of San Francisco (www.HCSF.com), with seven CDs in 11 years and constant appearances all over the planet. On the music scene in northern California all his life, his dedication to jazz, especially Gypsy swing has in some small way, hopefully, made the world a safer place for music.

The Hot Club of San Francisco



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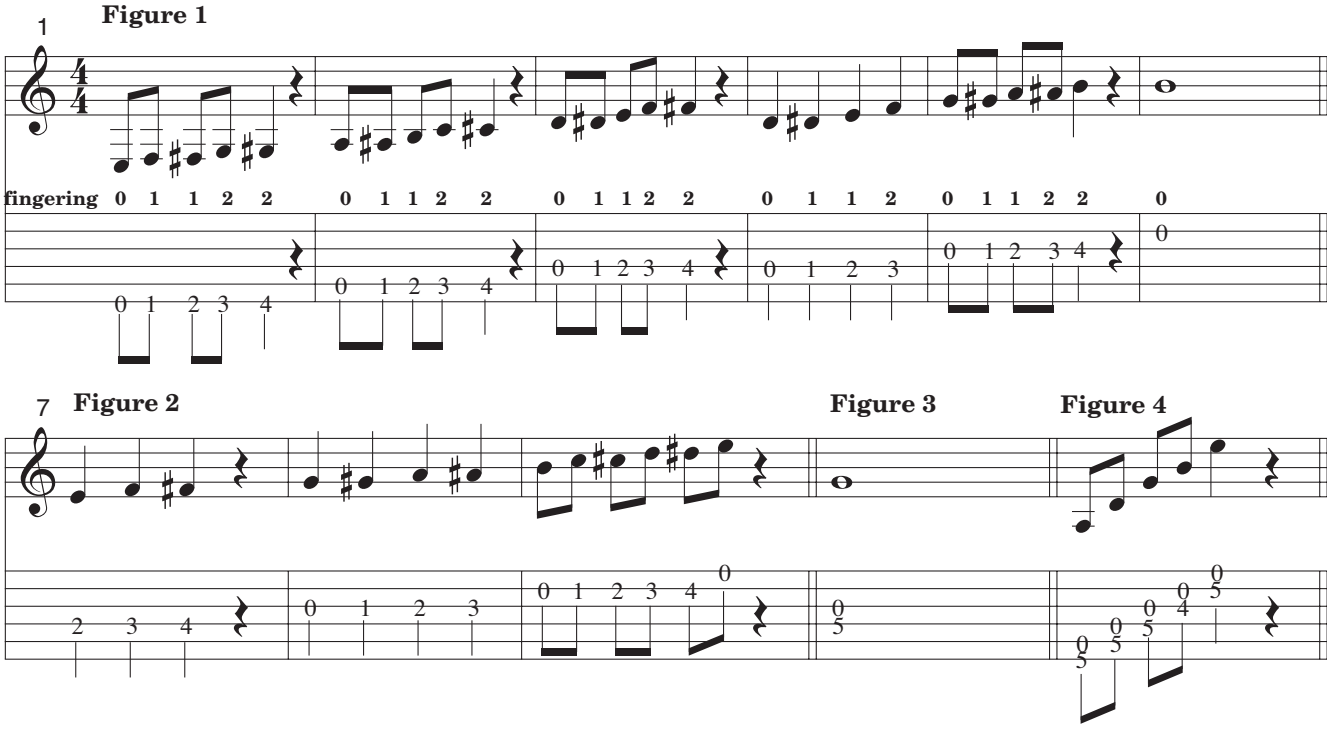

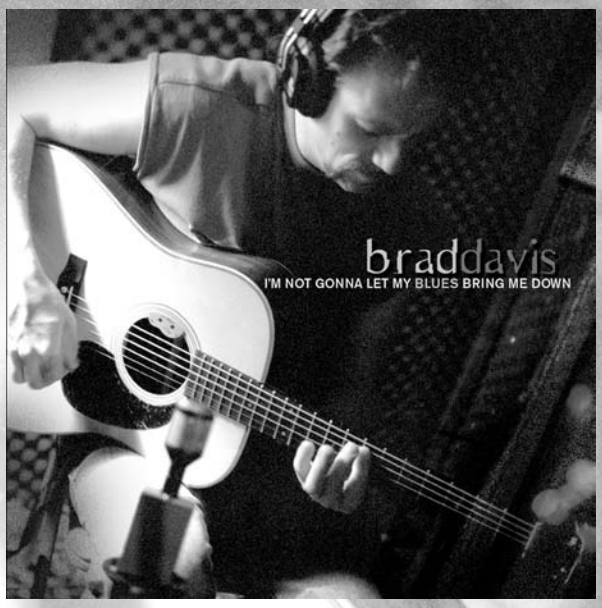

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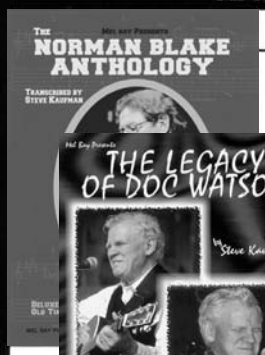

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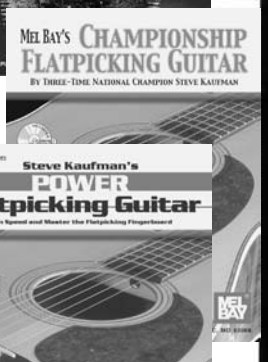

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THE O-ZONE

by Orrin Star

Tamlin

This is about my favorite Irish fiddle tune; it draws you in right from the start and doesn't let go until it's taken you to a whole other place. I learned it from New Jersey fiddler/guitarist Dave Rimelis as we brainstormed for tunes in preparation for the one gig we ever did together, and I've been performing it ever since. (Dave learned it from Natalie McMaster at a fiddle camp.)

Though I usually play "Tamlin" on the mandolin, it sits quite naturally on the guitar as well. As you will see, once we dispatch the initial lower octave iteration, the A-part's melody is a natural breeding ground for floating (providing a nice follow-up to our look at that technique using "Flowers of Edinbugh" last time). The second floated A-part break is a real finger stretcher, but is also perhaps the best demonstration of how well floating can work with certain melodies. And once you've played the B-part's melody straight, it can be treated as a real jam-out-in-Dm vehicle a la "Lonesome Fiddle Blues." (We start with some fairly straight ahead crosspicking and then move on in an attempt to split the Dm atom.)

So this arrangement has a little something for everyone in it. And the best part is that it's not too complicated; it should be accessible to most of you. (With a couple of caveats: floating breaks usually require more memorization than linear solos since they are a little counterintuitive. And you should play around with the fingerings: you want certain notes—like the ascending A, Bb and C quarter notes in the A-part—to ring as long as possible. And certain fingerings make it easier to play: during the initial B-parts you may want to make your Dm using your pinky on the third fret of the second string rather than your ring finger.)

Lastly, note that the chord structure on the B-part ends with a quick Bb - Gm- C - Dm sequence. This is slightly syncopated to fit the melody, and differs in feel from the rhythm on most American fiddle tunes. (I demonstrate the B-part rhythm on the CD that accompanies this issue.)

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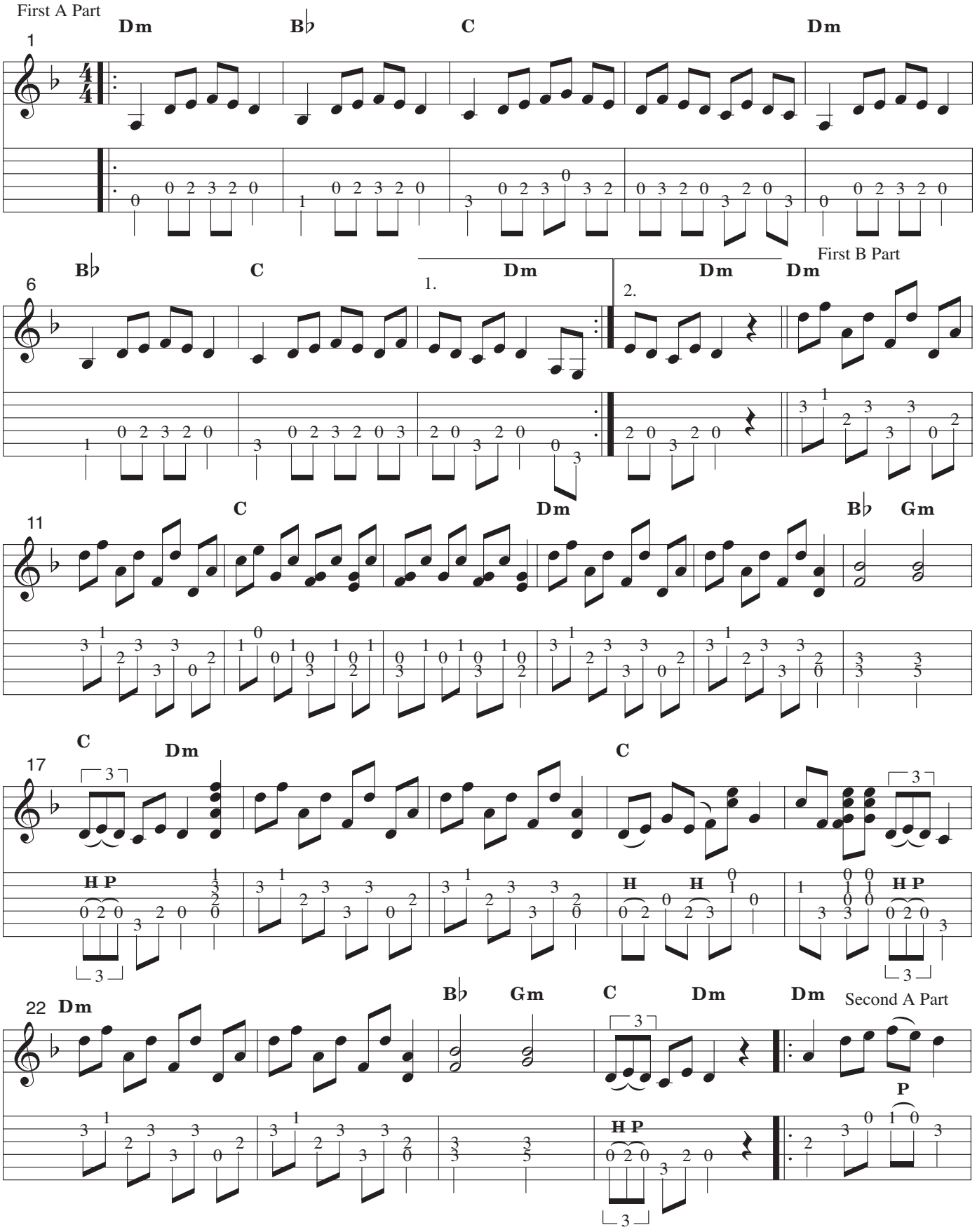
Tamlin

Arranged by Orrin Star

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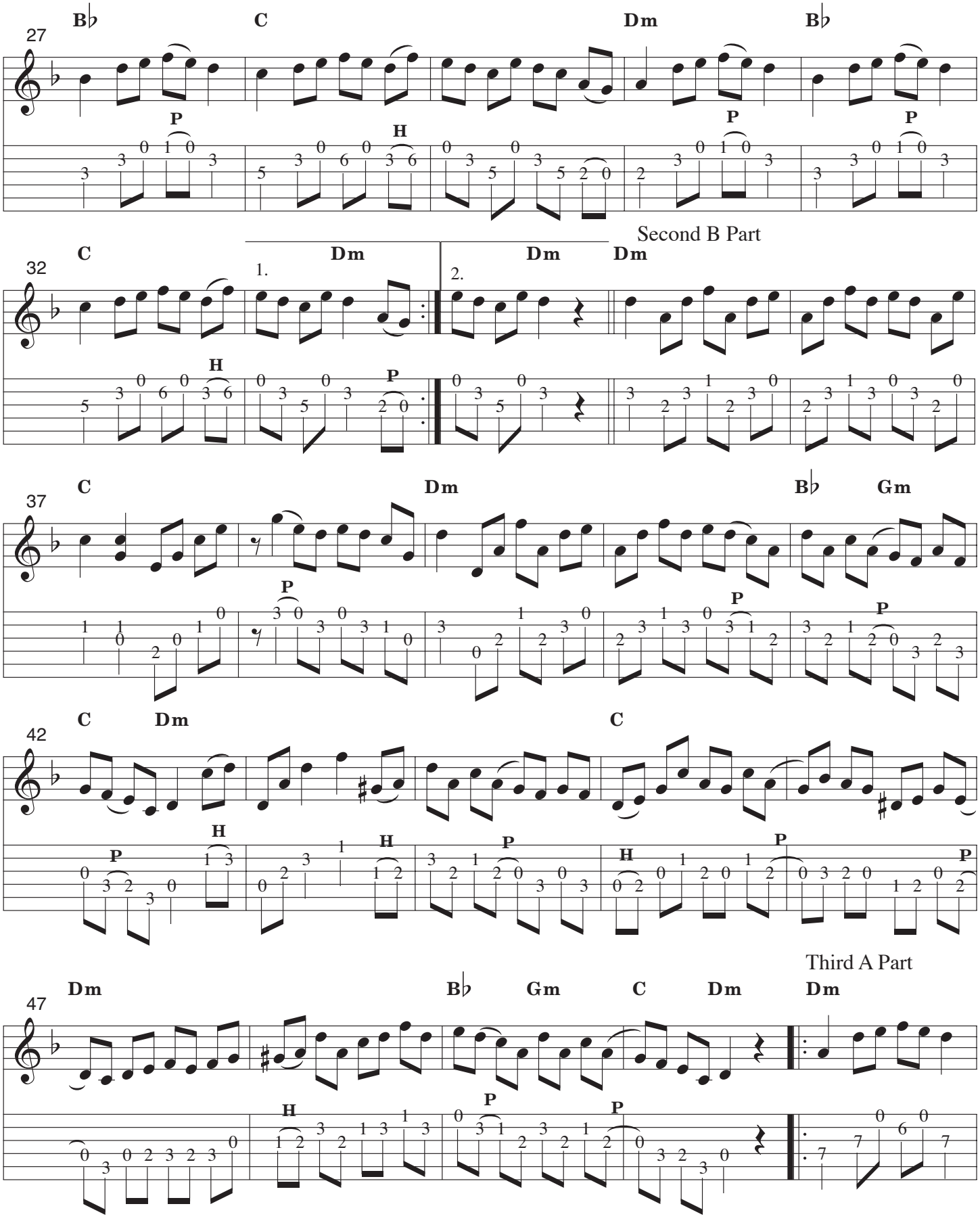
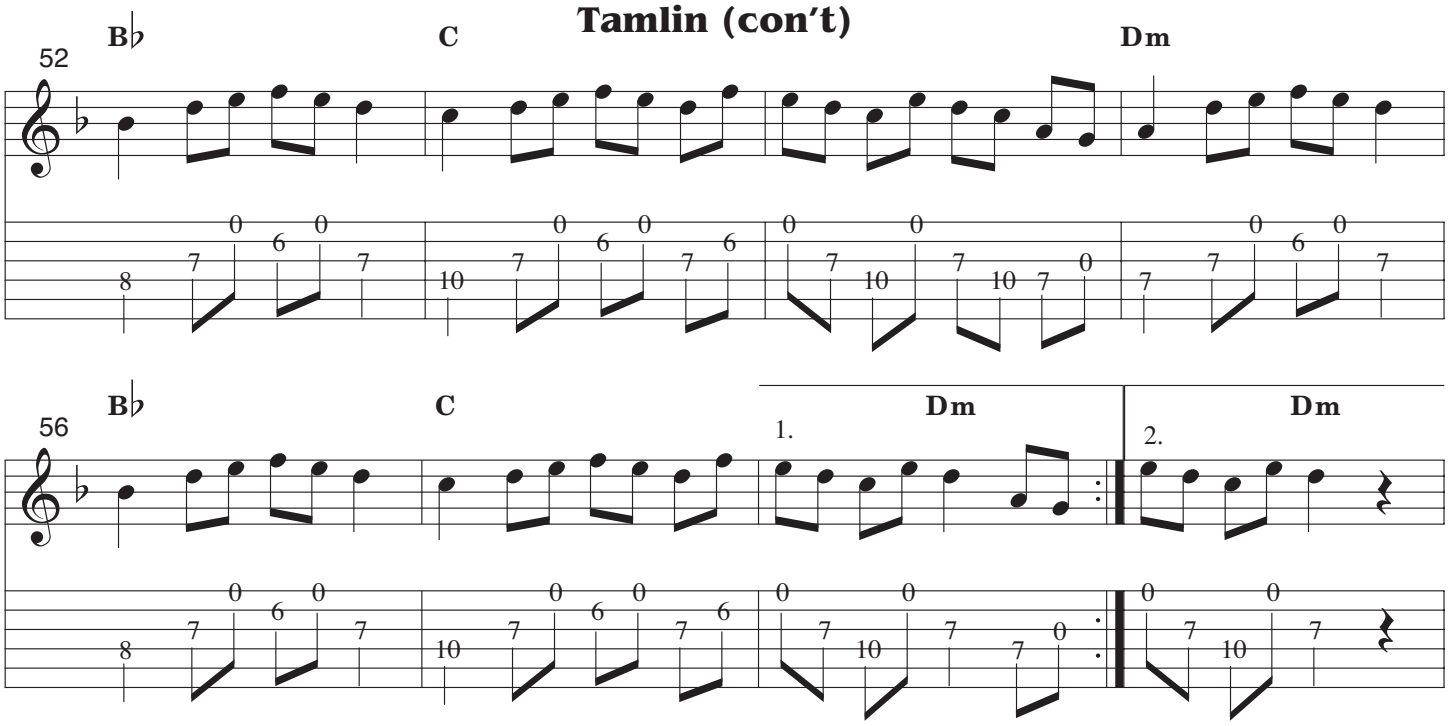

B♭
C
Dm
B♭
27
P
H
P
P
Second B Part
C
Dm
Dm
Dm
32
1.
2.
H
P
C
Dm
B♭
Gm
37
P
P
P
C
Dm
C
42
H
P
H
P
H
P
P
Third A Part
Dm
B♭
Gm
C
Dm
Dm
47
H
P
P

Tamlin (con't)



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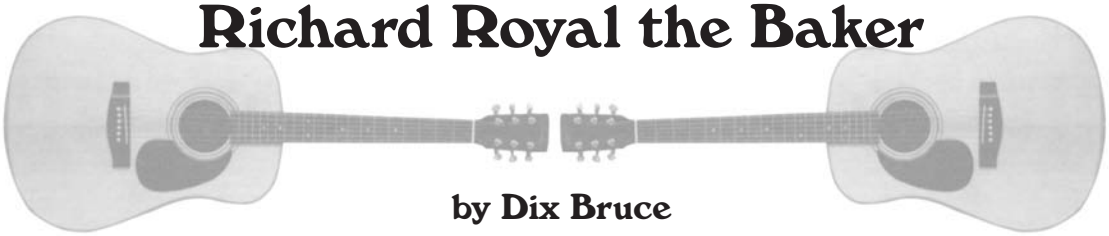
Richard Royal the Baker



by Dix Bruce

I wrote "Richard Royal the Baker" quite a few years ago and named it in honor of my good pal, mentor, and inspiration Duck Baker, who was born Richard Royal Baker the IV. Duck is a wonderful fingerstylist and around the time I wrote this song, he'd released a beautiful collection of Irish, Scottish, and English tunes entitled *Kid on the Mountain* (Kicking Mule KMCD-3913-2). Duck arranged these tunes for fingerstyle guitar with amazing moving lines and stunningly lovely harmonies. Listening to Duck play reminds me that the guitar has unlimited potential and that a great artist like Duck can take the music to new and dizzying heights. There's always more to hear and play.

The tune's title "Richard Royal the Baker" is also a bit of a play on words. You've probably heard of the tune "Angeline the Baker," which is in turn based the Stephen Foster song "Angelina Baker."

I wanted "Richard Royal the Baker" to have the flavor of a slow Celtic air with the time very relaxed and loose, like some of the tunes on Duck's CD. Initially I played the tune as a ballad with three or four other players on guitar, mandolin, and fiddle. Somewhere along the line I decided to perform it solo and the following arrangement emerged. It combines chord strums with melody notes in a kind of a chord melody style.

I placed the melody on the treble strings and these notes are often played as the final note of a chord strum. This technique provides a fuller sound than the single note melody alone. Combining the melody with the chord strums approximates two parts, lead and rhythm, on one guitar. Be sure to hold the chords as long as possible as you strum so they'll ring behind subsequent notes.

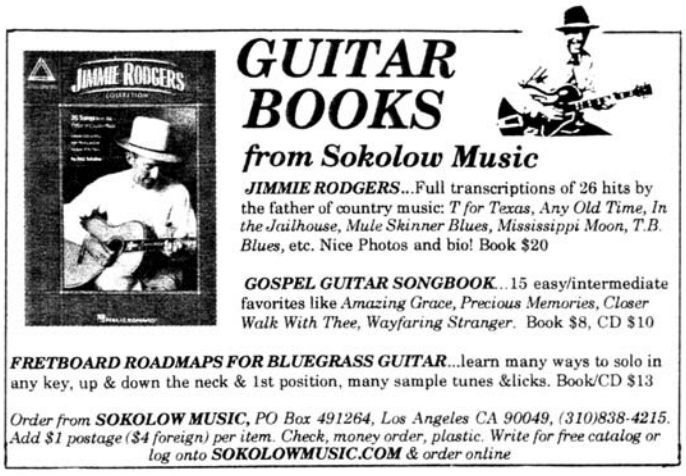
Arpeggiate the strums smoothly as you play and give the melody note a little extra accent so it pops out over the chord. Use the first Bm form in M3 and the second in M12. Use the modified G chord in M4.

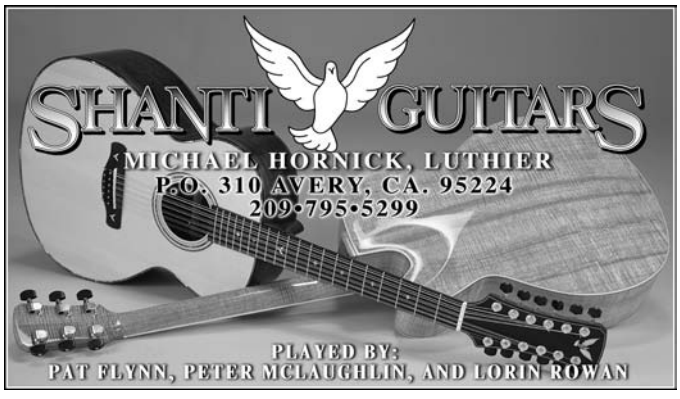
The slow, descending slide in M3 starts at the tenth fret of string two. Let it ring as long as you can make it last as you slide, to the third fret D, if possible. M11 has a slightly tricky hammer on/pull off combination followed by a low G note on string six. Try to keep both Gs sounding as you play the octave.

The second part of the tune includes several triplet hammer-on/pull-offs in M14–17. Listen to the recording if you have trouble with the timing.

I recorded "Richard Royal the Baker" with violinist Dave Balakrishnan and guitarist/mandolinist Bob Alekno. It's available on my CD *Tuxedo Blues* (www.musixnow.com). When I perform it as a guitar solo, my basic arrangement is to play it A-A-B-B-A-A, but if needed, I can stretch it out to twice through the form or longer. I hope you'll find "Richard Royal the Baker" to be a pretty and pleasant addition to your flatpicking repertoire.

Dix Bruce & Jim Nunally's "Brothers at Heart" is available online from http://www.musixnow.com. You can preview sound clips from several of the songs. His BackUP TRAX: Basic Blues for Guitar with fourteen classic blues: Country and Urban Blues, Acoustic and Electric Blues, Delta Blues, Texas Blues, Chicago Blues, Slide Guitar Blues, Alternate Tuning, Traditional and Modern Blues is also available online. Preview sound clips at http://www.musixnow.com. Musix, PO Box 231005, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523.





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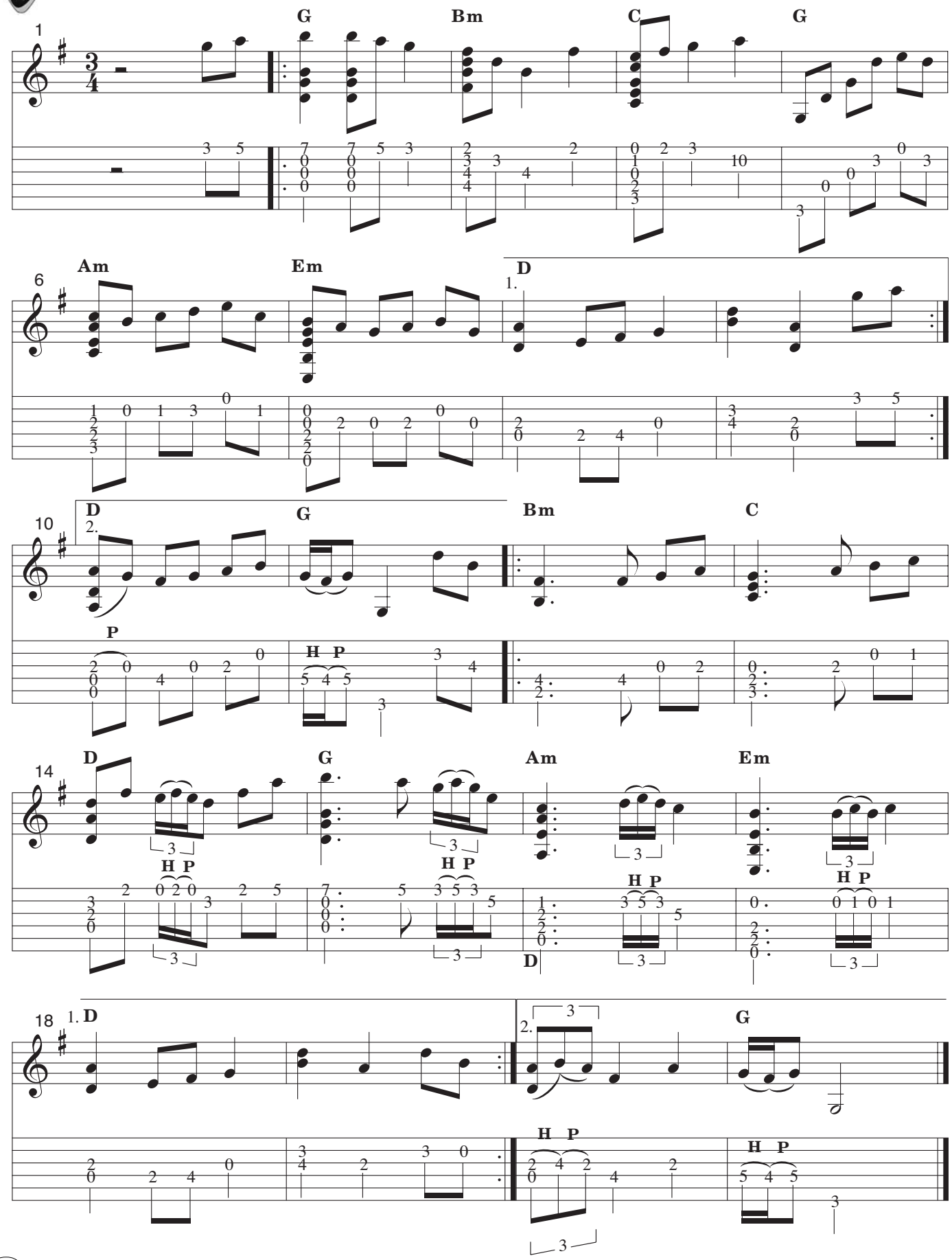
Richard Royal the Baker

By Dix Bruce

The Solo Flatpicker

by Dan Crary

Audio CD
Tracks 25-27

"From Struggler to Player"

I just went back and reviewed our last Solo Flatpicker column in the November/December issue so that I could be sure to pick it up from there in this column. As I looked up the title, I realized how titles sometimes mislead or tell only a fraction of the story. A column on the "church lick" sounds like it could be about one paragraph long, you know, just one lick. "Hell, that ain't no lesson!"

But wait, as they say in the late night infomercials, there's more. In this case much more. What we're really doing here is to give some big-picture help to you, the solo flatpicker. Because so many instructional materials are biased toward that flatpicker-in-a-bluegrass-band norm, they often seem about one standard deviation off the mean for the flatpicker in that lonely soloist category. Disclaimer: nothing wrong with flatpicking bluegrass in a band… I write some of those materials as well, myself. But the solo player faces some different challenges, and these lessons are intended to help you meet those.

So, again, the reason for going "back" to the church lick is that it will get you "forward" to better back-up, a fatter overall sound, a beautiful continuo effect that keeps the music solid between verses, and, interestingly enough, a fairly easy, do-able, yet effective way to move into making your own breaks, arrangements, and improvisations. So it's not just one lick, it's the very big picture. I doubt that you ever heard this from anybody, but you're hearing it now: it's time for you to move away from being a timid creature of the tab world, struggling with a weak and tentative execution of every tune or lick you play. And what you need to move to is to become confident, looking "relaxed" (for want of a better word) and playing with the authority that comes from being in charge of your conduct on the guitar.

"Whathehell is that Crary taking about now?" I know, it's a danrant, but this one is righteous: we've got to start being real players instead of strugglers, fooling ourselves that we're getting anywhere by reading and fooling around with yet more instructional material, reading more tabs, feeding at the guitar information trough, and after all, playing just about like you did last year or five years ago. I sent you back to one of the basics in our last lesson, because it is a way I have discovered to get people to play with polish and authority.

And I'm sending you back again. Here's the deal, I believe most of us wait too long in our playing to play with authority and confidence. The myth is that confident playing comes only after years of playing. But too many of us have put in the years, but are still struggling. So it's not the years, it's just that nobody has said, it's time to do this, now. Believe this: you can start looking and sounding like a real player very soon, whether you're a near-beginner player, a veteran player, a stuck-in-a-rut player, whatever… now you need to become a player. There's no elitism about any of this, every one of you can do this, and I mean in a few weeks, not years.

To do this you need a few things: First, you actually have to do it, take the steps, and don't give it the usual oh-that's nice-maybe-I'll-get-around-to-this-someday. Second, you need some fairly simple, memorized pieces that you can play the same way every time and on the guitar. Third, you need to start gathering a few short runs that you memorize just like a tune and make them automatic. On the first, it's more an attitude and a determination to move forward than anything else. If you decide to do this, you can. On the third, we start that next time.

The second item you need (some simple but musical, and memorized pieces) is what we began last time and will continue today on the CD. So first, please grab the last issue and revisit it, because if you read it, you probably "didn't get around around to it." OK, hold out your hand, here it is, that little wafer with "a round tuit" printed on it. So now you got it, let's really do this this time. Get the church lick solid, a la the last column, and get to work playing some tunes you know but never played this way, and then get them into the church-lick style, sorta' like "Wildwood Flower." More on the CD about this, as well; on the CD I'll give you some tips on how to do this differently if you're an inexperienced player.

I realize that some of you may actually have done what I suggested, and I want to give you a good-goin' for that. If you did, I want you to work on those tunes, and do this: visualize one or more of the most confident-looking, seasoned players you ever watched, and pretend to be just a confident as he or she was. Yes, you may need to fake it, but I tell you to do this for a reason. If you don't start playing confidently sometime, you'll never do it at all.

So again, start working these tunes, and go for the goal of playing them perfectly and the same way every time, plus pretending you're in front of an audience playing with confidence and authority. Will this feel stupid? Yes, it will… also childish and embarrassing, and o-god-I-hope-my-little-brother-doesn't-see-me-doing-this. So just to make your discomfort complete, now video tape yourself and do a critique: what little things in your playing give away to anyone who's watching that you're nervous or struggling? Make a note of them and just quit doing them, getting rid of one of them at a time. I'm going to make you a very weird promise, but I think it's good: if you start playing more easy-to-play, memorized pieces, plus acting more confident, you're going to discover that you start sounding more like a player.

How do I know that faking confidence will make your music actually sound better? Visualize Indiana Jones with a wicked smile, and trust me.

Break Time

by

Chris Jones

This column will be a digression from the usual discussion of breaks to bluegrass songs. We would have renamed the column "Not Break Time" but Dan Miller felt it wasn't worth doing just for one issue and I had to agree.

Because this is the issue focusing on Celtic music, I wanted to relate my unexpected foray into this genre last year that was both rewarding and musically eye-opening.

I was called in December of 2002 to go out on tour as a guitarist and guest vocalist with The Chieftains on their 2003 winter U.S. tour, beginning in January and culminating in New York's Lincoln Center on St. Patrick's Day. Jeff White, former FGM cover boy, referred me, and I guess this is my first opportunity to publicly thank him. Jeff had not only been out on tour with them a lot in the past couple of years, but had assisted Paddy Maloney (the Chieftains' piper, tin whistle player and bandleader) with material selection for their Irish/Bluegrass fusion "Plank Road" projects.

Neither Jeff nor the Chieftains, though, knew that I had been listening to the Chieftains and other Celtic artists since my teens, at the same time that I was flooding my brain with the Stanley Brothers and Flatt and Scruggs and learning to use a flatpick. I was pretty thrilled to get this call.

In spite of my interest in the music, my playing experience with it was limited to some jam sessions with Irish musicians in Albuquerque in the 70s. Knowing that with the three weeks' practice time I had, or even with three wishes from a genie, I couldn't suddenly become Arty McGlynn (see cover story), I concentrated on being myself but adapting the bluegrass rhythm style to the different feel of Irish music. Since the tour was meant to promote the new bluegrass/greengrass (as Paddy called it) project, this approach made sense and was similar to what Jeff had been doing.

I did very little lead playing in the shows, and what I did was nicely covered up by the rest of the musicians (a relief). Those unfamiliar with this music will note right away that it doesn't use the jazz-like form of bluegrass in which musicians trade breaks. Individuals are spotlighted instead as part of the arrangements in which they are playing solo, later adding in other members of the band or all the members with everyone playing the melody together.

Since this was the first tour without Derek Bell, the Chieftains' long time harpist and pianist who had passed away in the fall of 2002, the guitar was relied on more heavily for accompaniment, another reason not to play much lead. Paddy Maloney stressed this point in my first phone conversation with him.

I fortunately had some limited experience playing rhythm in 6/8 (jig) and 9/8 (slip jig) time, but I definitely needed to practice it (add this to the "How I Spent My Christmas Vacation" file). Rhythm for reels comes more naturally to a bluegrasser, since many of our tunes started out as Irish or Scottish reels, but the feel is more deliberate and danceable. As with bluegrass or any kind of music, I found listening to my guitar playing within the total sound of the group to the be the best way to adapt and fit in musically with what was going on.

You'll discover by listening to Celtic rhythm guitarists like McGlynn, that while the music leaves less room for improvising off of a melody, there is much more flexibility with chords used for accompaniment, though only if you're the only chording instrument (i.e. the bass player must have left the building). This is a pretty liberating idea for a bluegrass guitar player, but it's important to know what kinds of substitutions are appropriate and what aren't. I chose on this tour to stick to my roots and keep it pretty straight.

I'd say that the most interesting musical aspect of the tour for me was how the music and arrangements were tight and complex yet maintained a loose feel and presentation. For example, the encore would frequently involve a medley of tunes, some of which I'd never heard before. The key was generally called out to me right before changing tunes, but that was all the briefing I got. It gave the feel of a really good jam session, except it was in the middle of some concert hall like the Kennedy Center in Washington. I loved it.

On a technical side note, I played my usual Gallagher G-70 guitar with a combination of a pickup and a microphone which worked pretty well. The microphone provided the majority of the house guitar sound, with more pickup being used in the monitors to deter feedback. I used a calibratable tuner to assist with some quick changes to drop D tuning. Because of Paddy's Uilleann pipes, we tuned up to A 447 (this was almost as high as Lester Flatt tuned his guitar in the early '50s), and that would vary a little with climate.

Thanks to the Chieftains and thanks again to Jeff White for giving me a rare chance to play music with some teenage heroes of mine and for a chance to broaden my musical outlook.

Music Theory:
Mastering the Fingerboard
Technical Studies for Flatpickers

by Michel A. Maddux

Bluegrass music, playing in the park.
Bluegrass music pickin' way past dark.
— John Hartford

Whenever I get to a new town, it is important to check out the local music scene. The music that I love is not produced in a studio according to a formula. It is what is produced by a live band, up there under the lights, giving their best.

The Colorado Springs music scene presents jazz, blues, and the occasional bluegrass, and Irish groups. Now these are not just the traveling musicians who charge $20 for a ticket, the majority of them are perspiring local musicians who deserve to be heard. Often, they can be found in local clubs with no cover charge. All you have to do is show up.

How often do you go out to support the live local music scene? I hope that at least twice a week you turn off the TV and get out to hear someone playing live. As John Hartford intoned, "…that's where it's at…"

Double Stops and the Pivot Exercise:

The first set of exercises is used to develop skill and control at handling double stops. These are useful in adding depth and richness to the sound.

Hold the pivot finger down and move the others around. Keep the middle finger down on the third fret D during the entire exercise. Note that all of this exercise is played from second position using the form below.

Blarney Pilgrim

One of my favorite local bands to see in a live venue was the Blarney Pilgrim, a four piece Irish group, featuring fiddles, guitar, and hammered dulcimer. No longer together, they had a run of over 10 years on the first Friday of each month at the Margarita in Colorado Springs, and it was my pleasure to join them there as often as my schedule would allow. Randy Zombola, a Winfield winner and National Champion on hammered dulcimer, shared the tune "Farewell to Whiskey" with me.

About the Tune

Written in 1799, "Farewell to Whiskey" was originally a plaintive air lamenting the prohibition of whiskey-making in Scotland. The ban was repealed in 1801 and the lament eventually became a lively march.

The version that I present here is similar to the slower version that the Blarney Pilgrim played on Friday nights in the Margarita, and follows the original composition of a slow air or lament.

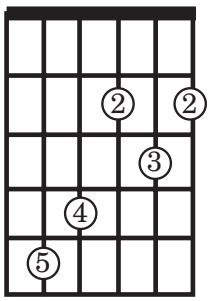
This version uses both the relative minor (the E minor), and the second relative (the A minor) in the key of G, along with the I-IV-V chords. Allow the long tones to sustain to get a full rich sound from the guitar. As a solo piece, keep the strums going in between the melody note, and watch the arpeggio patterns.

Play measures 4 and 7 using the middle finger on the D (second string, third fret) to allow the other fingers mobility to play the melody, just like you practiced in the exercises above.

Have fun, and keep on pickin'!

In the 90s, Mike could frequently be found in the final round of flatpickers at the National Flatpicking Championships. He presently performs, writes, and teaches in the mountain circuit west of Colorado Springs, and still does a regular show on the second Friday of each month at Margarita in Colorado Springs. You can send him email with questions or comments via his website at http://www.madduxband.com.

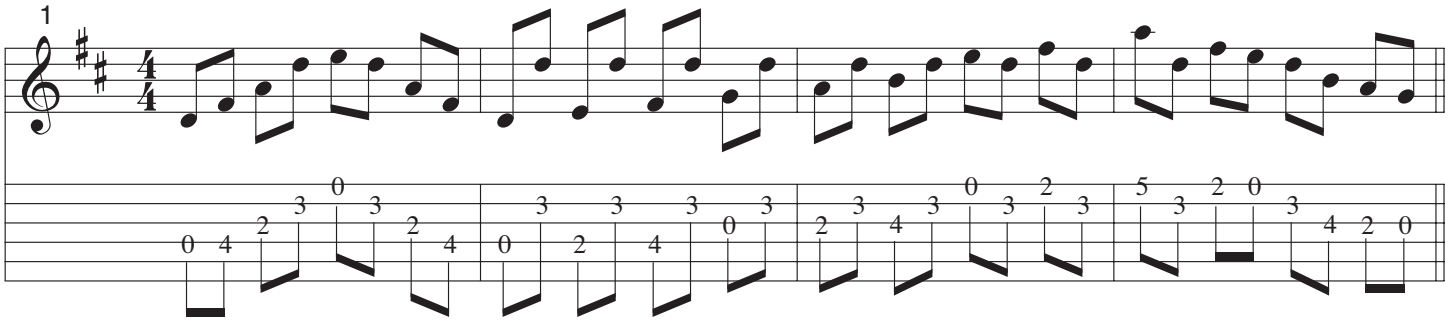
D



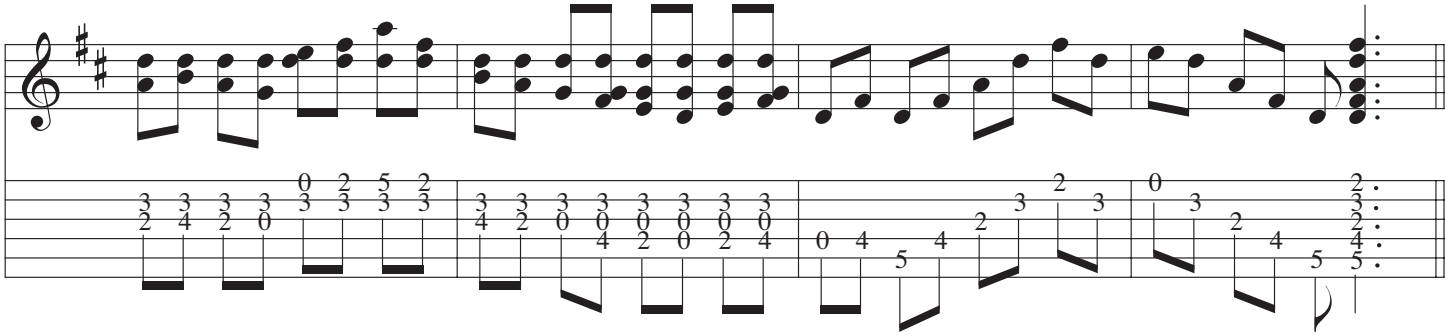
Audio CD
Track 29

Maddux Exercises

Exercise: Interval Skips and Double Stops in D position



Exercise: Down Strokes **Alternating Strokes**



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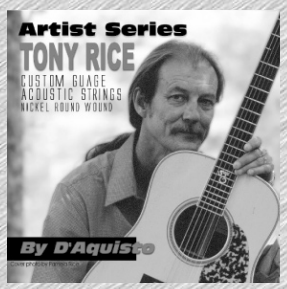
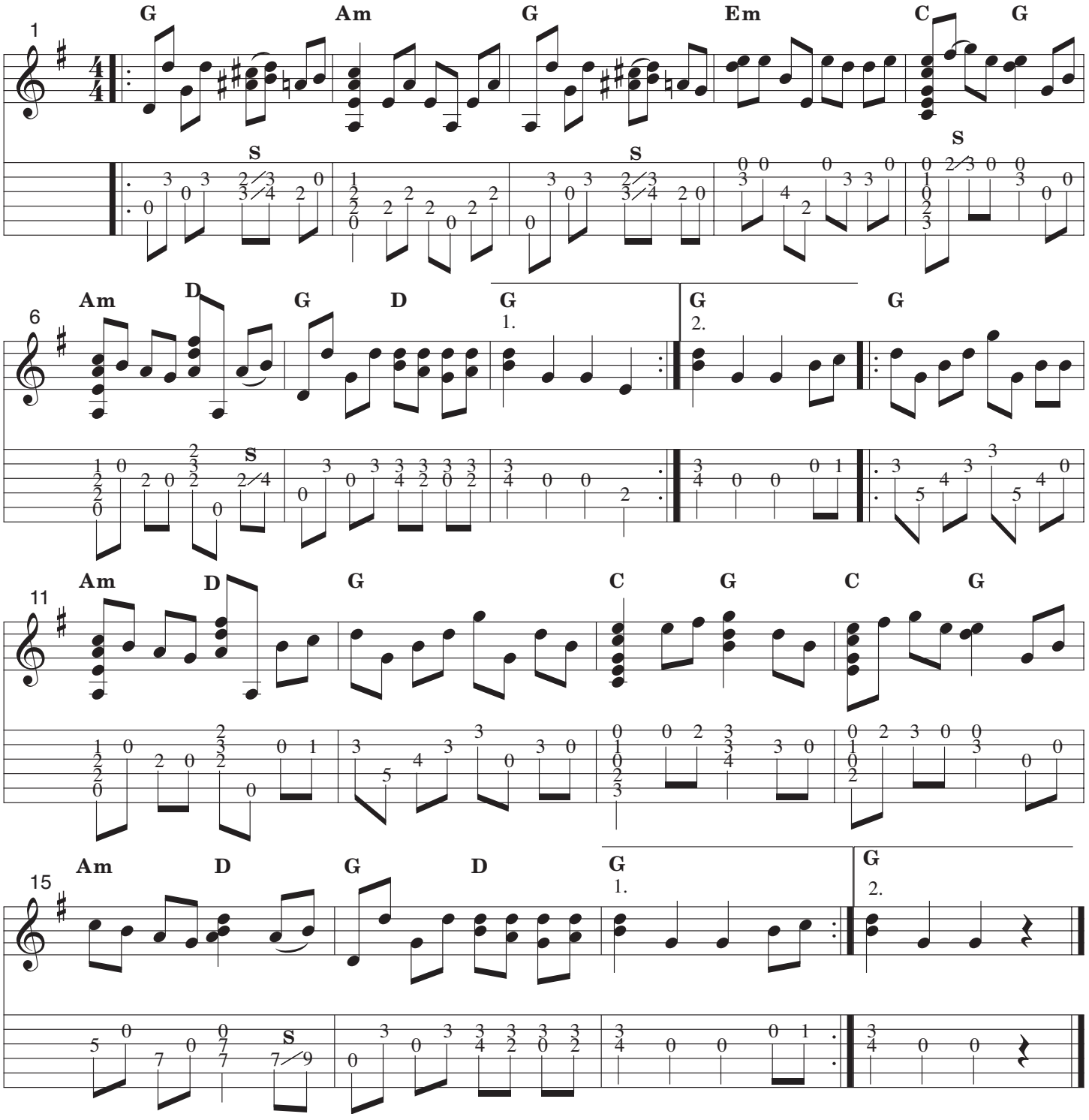


Audio CD
Tracks 31-32

Farewell to Whiskey

Written by Mike Maddux

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Gospel Guitar

with Harold Streeter

The Ash Grove ("Sent Forth By God's Blessing")

As this is *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine's* Celtic issue, it seemed fitting to present a popular Celtic melody this time around known as "The Ash Grove." Originally a Welsh harp melody, many variations have been written in Welsh and English for "Ash Grove" since 1802. So many variations, in fact, that this column could consist of nothing but song titles. There are four sets of lyrics for "Ash Grove" alone, not to mention the many title variations in Welsh. Here are just a few of them, which can be found online at www.gurman.org/ashgrove/: "All Hail to Thee Cambria"; "In the Ash Grove Palace"; "The Irish Free State"; "Let All Things Now Living"; "The Master Hath Come"; "On This Night Most Holy"; "Sir Watkin"; "The Way I Behaved" (Prince Lir's Song); "Lywyn Onn"; "Gogoniant i Gymru" (Glory to Wales); "Wrth Ddringo Drwy'r Rhedyn"; and "Sent Forth by God's Blessing."

The last title in the group ("Sent Forth by God's Blessing") is the subject of this column. Not knowing at the time that the melody was that of "Ash Grove," I fell in love with it while singing in our church choir. It's through that piece that I became acquainted with "Ash Grove," thanks to the small print at the bottom of the sheet music, and to a few musician friends who were aware of it long before I was.

The arrangement here is fairly simple and straight-forward, at least as compared to a few of the tabs which have appeared in this column. Actually, the tab consists of two arrangements, one for the melody, and one for the harmony. The latter is included in the event you find yourself in the vicinity of a second guitarist, and because to my mind at least, the piece sounds great played that way. There's no need, however, to learn the second part: the song is complete with just the melody tab.

As you'll hear on the CD for this issue, the slow tempo demonstration is recorded in stereo so that you may play along with the harmony by turning down the melody channel, or vice-versa. As you'll also hear on the normal tempo demonstration, the piece is a moderate tempo waltz, so it shouldn't take long for you to get it up to normal tempo.

Incidentally, the above-mentioned web site contains the lyrics for all of the various titles. The first two verses of "Sent Forth by God's Blessing" are included here. As you can see from the lyrics, it's a great exit song for ending a church service.

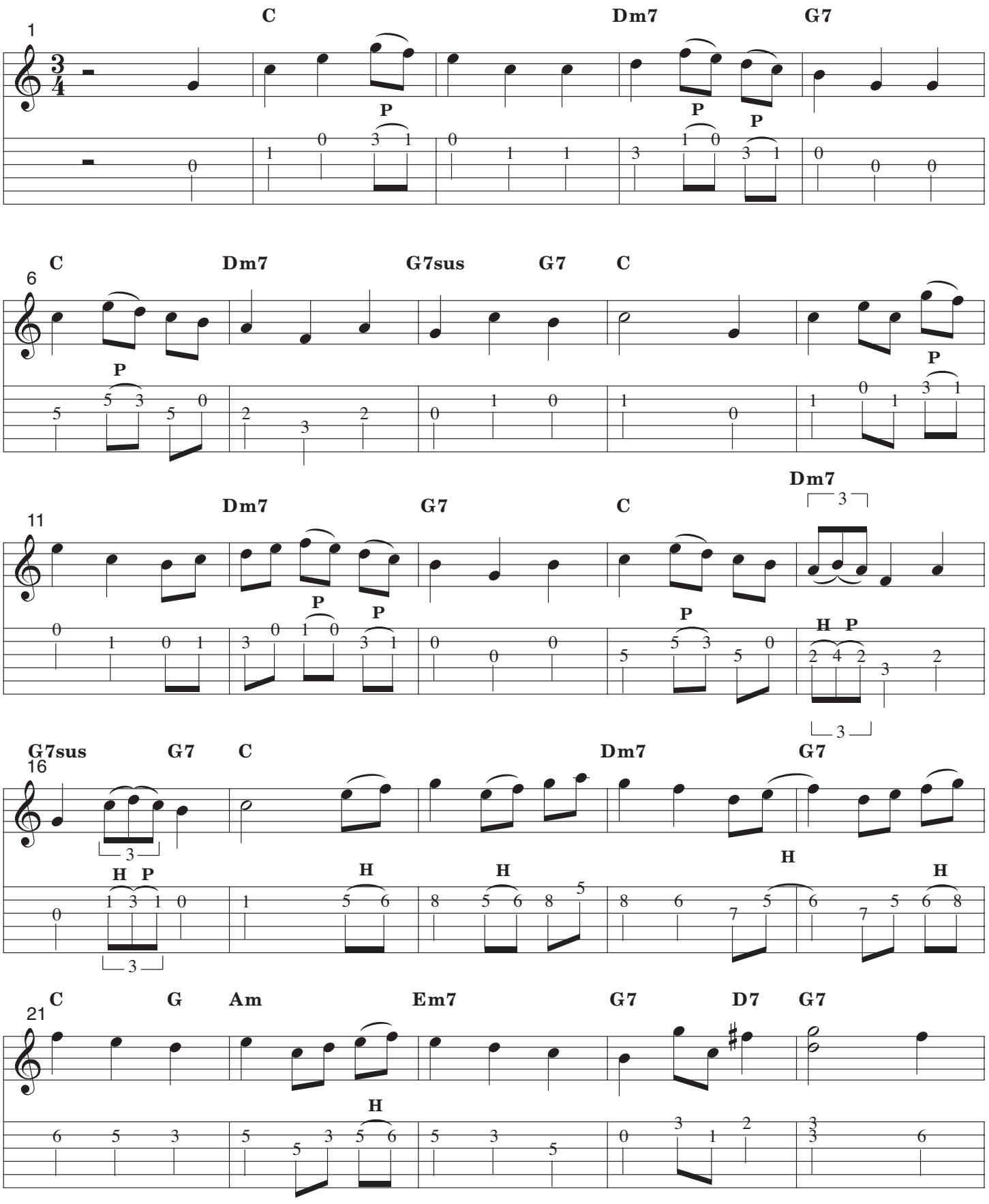
As always, ideas for songs in this column are most welcome. Just email them to: lewalt@icehouse.net. Don't forget to check in with us on www.lewalt.com once in a while to see what's new in the flatpicking department.

Sent Forth By God's Blessing

Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
The people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended, oh, now be extended,
The fruits of this service in all who believe.
The fruit of Christ's teaching, receptive souls reaching,
Shall blossom in action for God and for all.
His grace did invite us, His love shall unite us,
To work for God's kingdom, and answer His call.

Audio CD
Tracks 35-36

The Ash Grove

Arranged by Harold Streeter

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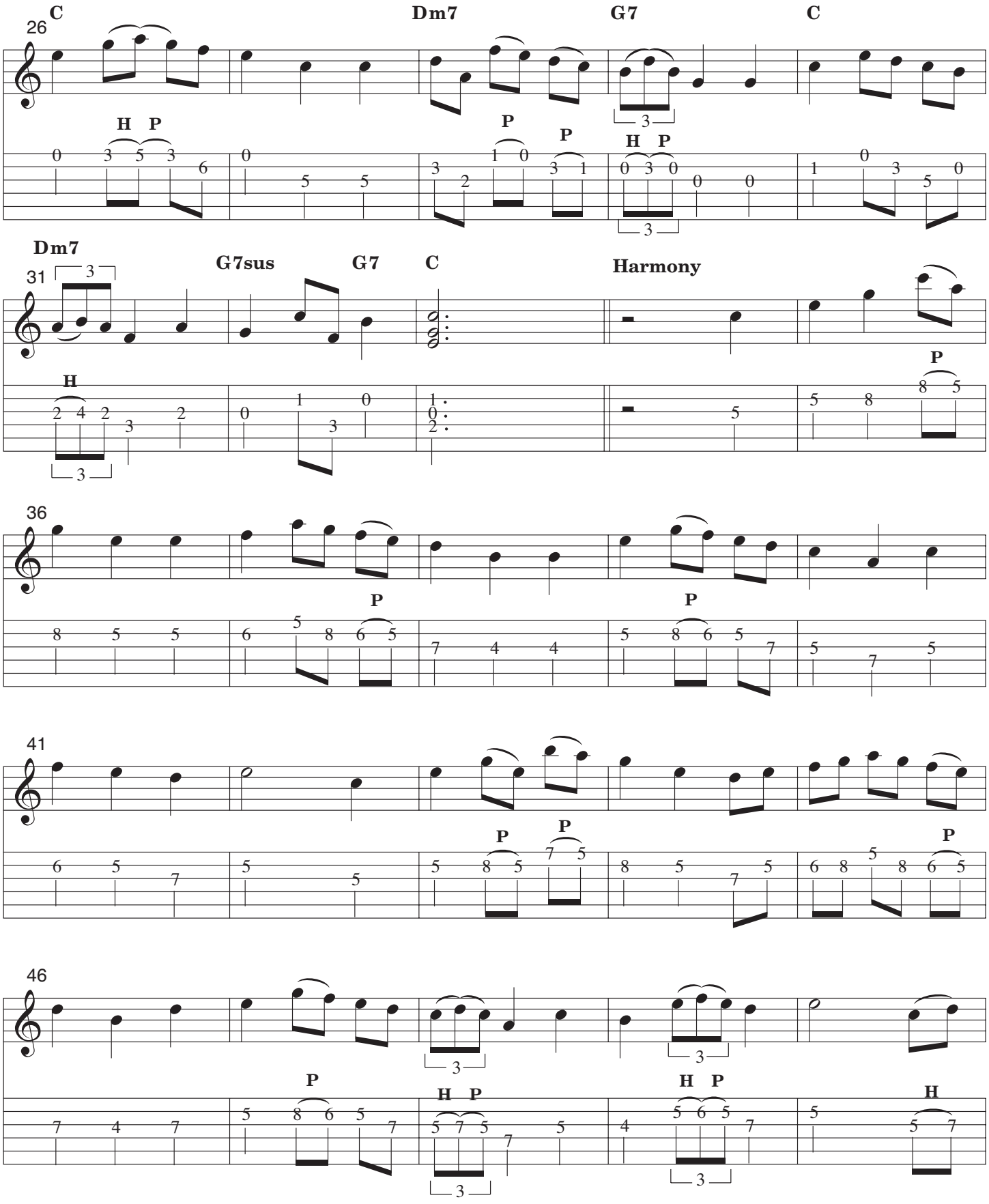
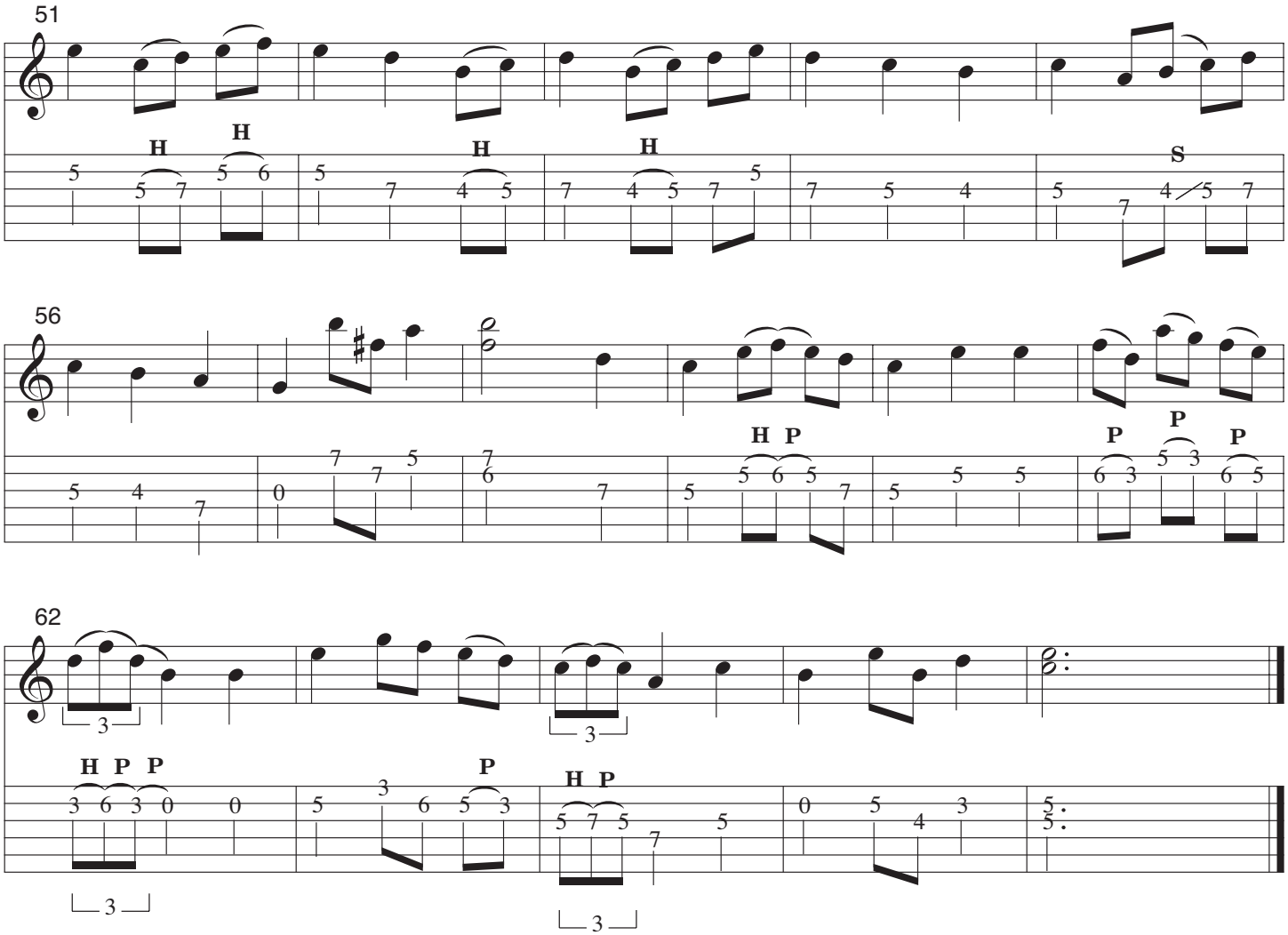
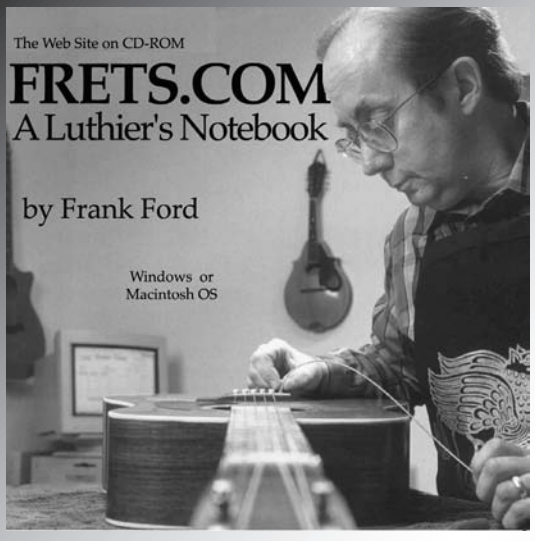

The Ash Grove (con't)





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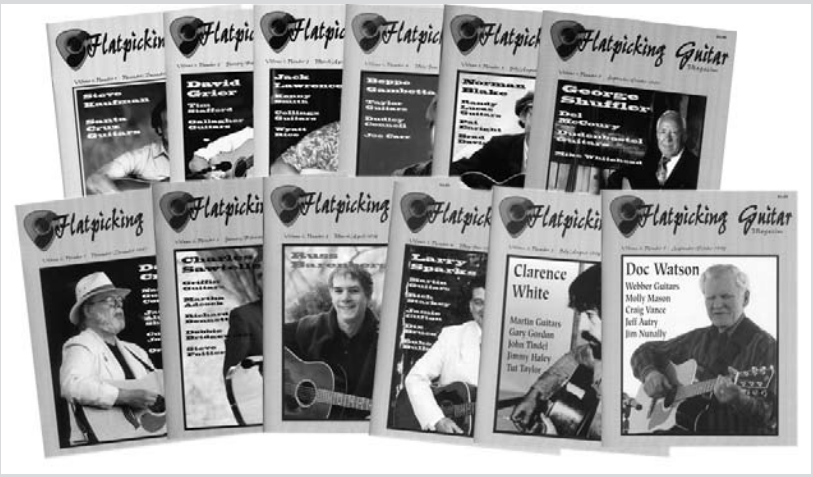
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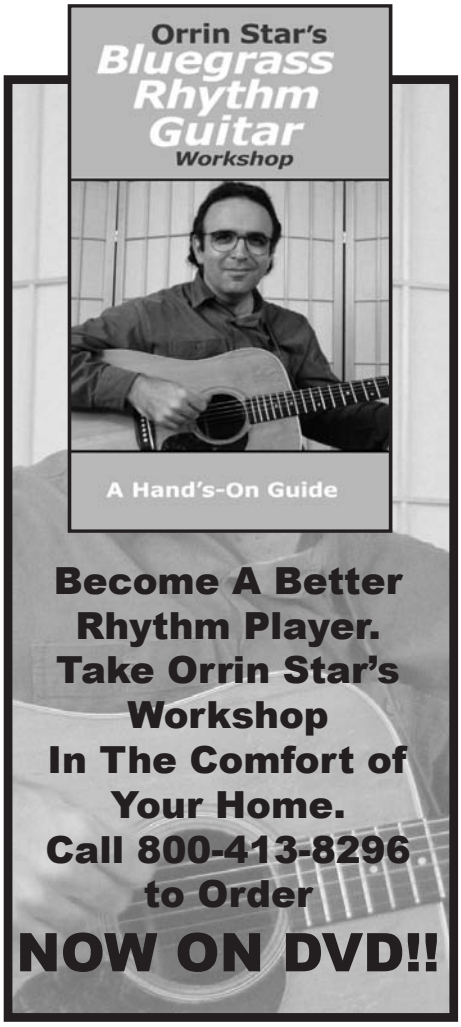

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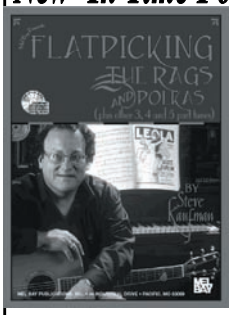

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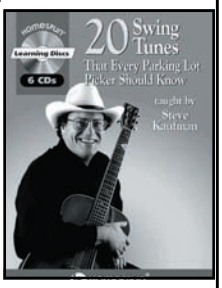

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Audio CD
Track 37

My Irish Home

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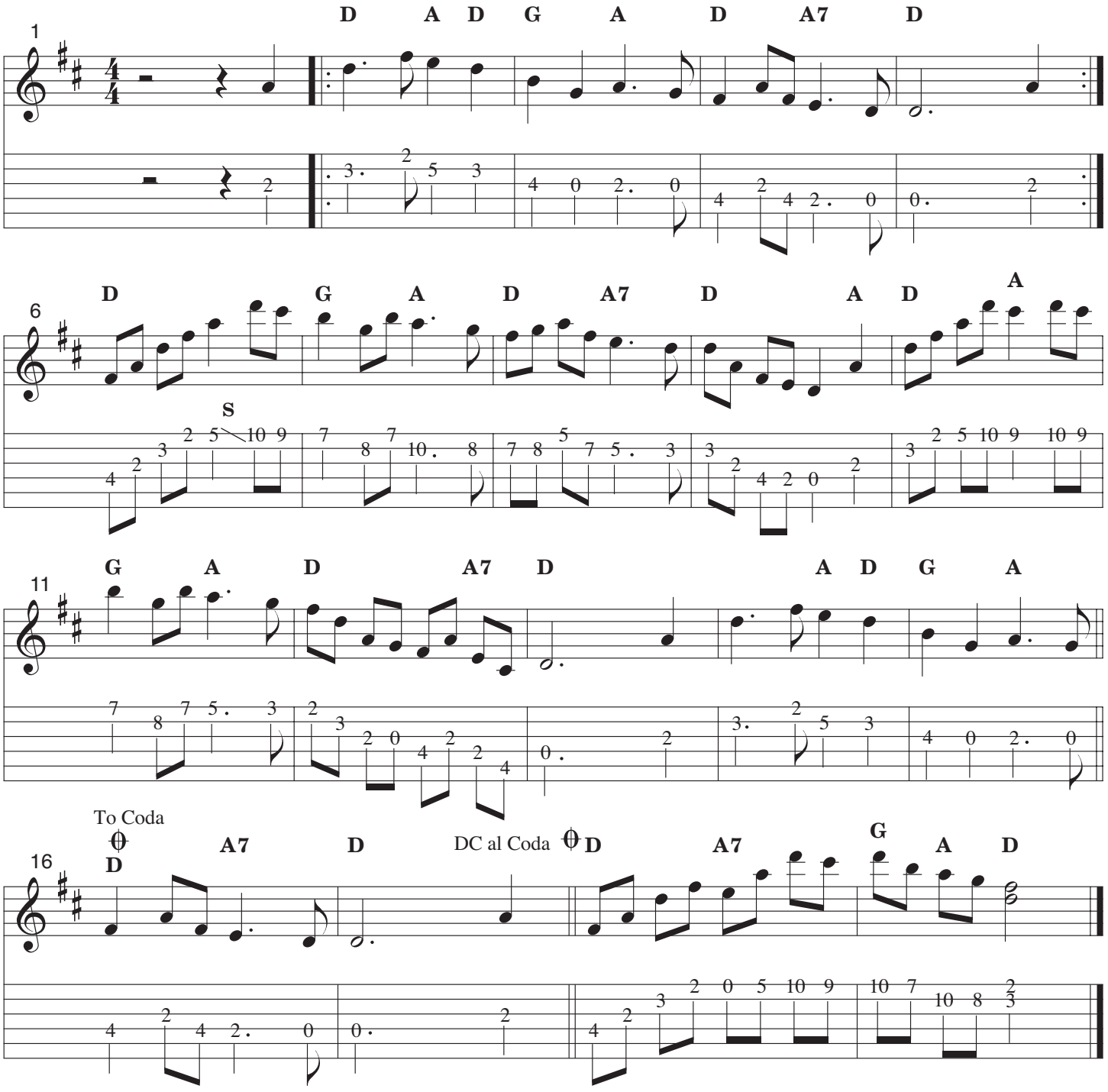
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PICKIN' FIDDLE TUNES
by Adam Granger

JIGGIFICATION

Jiggification--noun: The process of converting a non-jig into a jig

What better venue to delve into this back alley of fiddledom than the Celtic issue! The faithful Granger readers among you will recognize jigs as an ongoing topic in this column. They will also strongly suspect that I made up the title word of this column, and they will be right.

There exists, especially in the Celtic and Canadian jig repertoires, a wealth of tunes untapped by flatpickers. Wondrous melodies languish unpicked and thus unheard. Abandoned waifs—beautiful children all—whimper softly into their pillows at night, hoping that some 6/8 samaritan will take them in.

In light of these thousands of neglected jigs, then, it only makes sense that we would create even more jigs. . . Okay, that was a check to see if you were paying attention: it actually makes no sense whatever for me to add even more musical bodies to the jig orphanage. My profligate indulgence, however, is all the more reason that you flatpickers should step to the plate, as it were. If each of you adopted even one or two of these urchins, think what a better world it would be.

As I said, I've talked about jigs on numerous occasions: In *FGM,* V1 N2, I describe the three types of jigs, give an example of each and talk about the different ways to pick jigs; in V5 N1, I offer three more jigs and review the basics; and, in V7 N6, I present three Northern jigs and a quick review. (Also, on the accompaniment CD for that issue, I demonstrate some different jig backup styles.) If you don't have these issues, they can probably be had from *FGM*. If any of them are out of print, let me know and I'll send you a copy of that column.

In the meantime: a mini-mini review of lead and rhythm jig-playing: Pick the lead either "D-U-D D-U-D", to conform with the "ONE-two-three TWO-two-three" triplet jig lilt, or with straight alternation, artificially accenting the upstroked fourth note of each measure to capture the lilt. As for accompaniment, the two most common styles are to chunk on each of the two beats of each measure, or to play a syncopated boom-chick style wherein the boom happens on the first note of each triplet and the chick on the third. These are demonstrated in the *FGM* companion CD. Don't know what a jig sounds like? Think *Pop Goes the Weasel* or *The Irish Washerwoman*.

Now, about jiggification: I coined this term when a student asked me about *The Greensleeves Jig*. I hadn't heard of it, but surmised that it was the old British Isles melody *Greensleeves* made into a jig. I wrote it out that way, and subsequently found out that my hunch was right. Since *Greensleeves* is in 3/4 time, and since jigs are in 6/8 time, one has but to speed up *Greensleeves* to create a jig out of it. Okay, pickers, have a go. . .

READING *EASYTAB*

Easytab is like conventional tablature, except that timing notation has been streamlined and simplified. Since fiddle tunes are comprised mainly of eighth notes, *Easytab* uses the eighth note as its basic unit. An eighth rest is indicated by a dot. Therefore, a note with a dot after it is a quarter note, and a note with three dots after it is a half note. There are a total of eight notes and rests per measure.

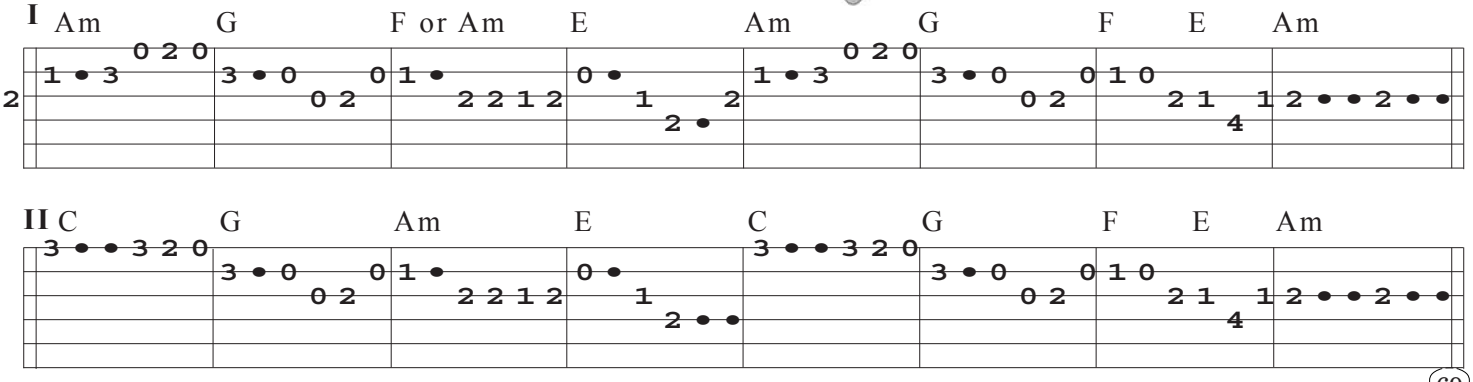
FOR BEGINNERS

Pick with an alternating style: down-up-down-up-down-up etc. The first note of each measure should be a downstroke, the last an upstroke. **Include rests** in this alternating pattern. This keeps you "in synch", playing downstrokes on the beats, so that, no matter what the configuration of notes and rests in an eight-unit measure, the right hand plays them down-up-down-up-down-up-down-up.

Audio CD Track 39

GREENSLEEVES JIG

KEY: Am

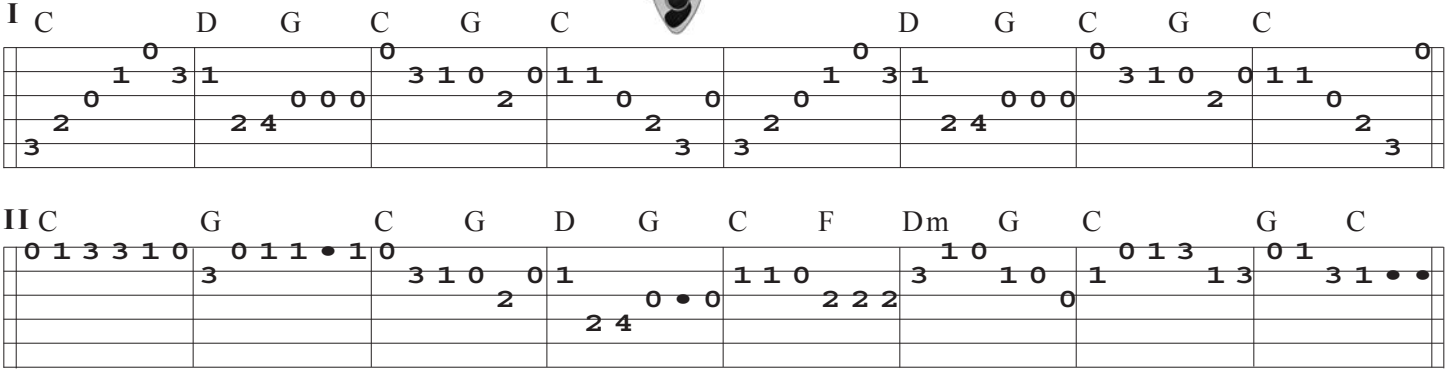


Pretty neat, huh? You're probably wondering if this works for all waltzes. Well, technically, yes, but sometimes the jiggification process can yield output that sounds parodic or facetious, especially if the original tune is well-known. Consider what happens when we take our beloved national anthem, which is a waltz (think about it), and jiggify it:

THE STAR SPANGLED JIG

Audio CD
Track 40

KEY: C



It's not that it doesn't work, but it sounds almost as if we're making fun of the original music. This may be the intention, of course, but if it's not, care must be taken in the presentation and context of the jiggified piece, especially if it's someone's national anthem. Our efforts to present jiggified tunes respectfully and seriously aren't helped by the fact that jigs are just so danged playful and frisky.

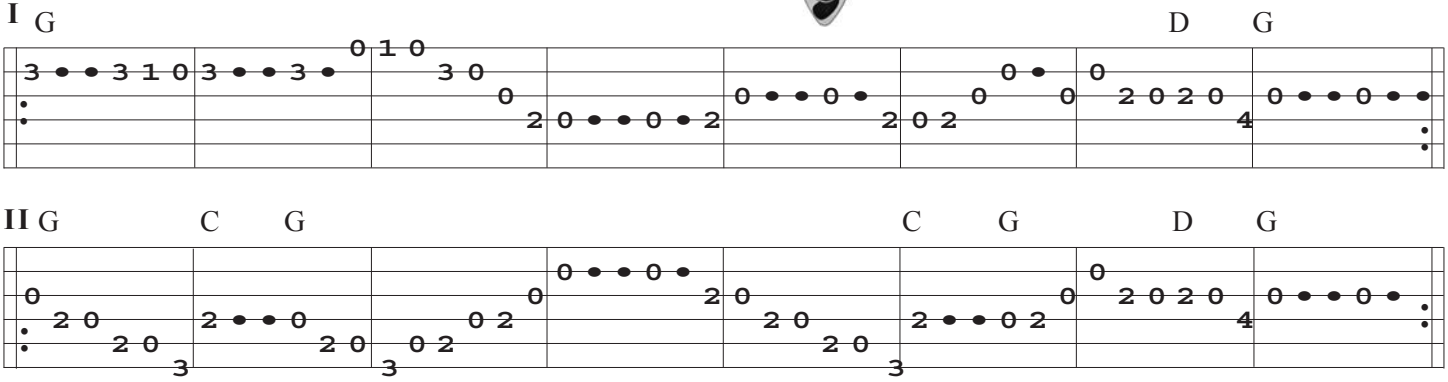
Note also that we've left a few notes out of the tune. These can be reinstalled via hammer-ons and pull-offs. (I do this on the *FGM* CD.)

By now, you are no doubt having Big Fun with Jiggification, and you thirst for more. You've run through the waltzes you know, and you're wondering if you can convert 2/4 tunes—reels, breakdowns and such—to jigs. Absolutely, although with the aforementioned caveat appended. Since the 2/4 cadence is so very different from the 3/4-6/8 cadence, the conversion process will involve more creativity on your part. In a nutshell, just make sure that you start each measure—or two-measure phrase—with the same note as in the original, but convert the innards of the measure from an eight note format to a six note format. Play the tune below and see if you recognize it.

THE POT O' GOLD JIG

Audio CD
Track 41

KEY: A (CAPO 2)



Well, did you recognize *The Pot O' Gold Jig* as our old friend *Gold Rush*? Do you get it? Do you kind of see how it works? Could you see the wheels turning in my medium-sized Okie brain? Are you inspired? Are you fired up? Are you saying, "If *he* can do it, *I* certainly can do it"? Good.

Now, one final pep talklet: Even if you don't get into picking jigs, it's worth your while to spend a bit of time on the accompaniment styles just to be a better-rounded musician. You never know when you're going to run into someone who plays jigs. What if you discover that your fiance's dad—who, upon your first meeting, didn't like the cut of your jib—plays jigs on the fiddle? Or what if you're doing hard time and it turns out that the warden is a jig freak? Or what if, upon your arrival at the pearly gates, you find that St Peter's packing a fiddle case—well, you get the idea. All right; we're done. Now go make your corner of the world a better place in which to live. Remember, flatpickers, you *can* make a difference!

Adam will be teaching rhythm guitar at Steve Kaufman's Flatpick Kamp again this year, and will spend a bit of time on jig backup. He will also return for his seventh straight year to Camp Bluegrass, in Levelland, Texas, where he'll join fellow FGM. columnists Joe Carr and Chris Jones on the guitar faculty. His new album, Solo Plectrum, *will be out by then. That will be Adam's tenth album, and will be followed by a Christmas album. When Adam gets to a dozen albums, he'll reassess his life and decide whether to go to astronaut school or to enroll in premed school with an eye toward brain surgery. Barring those two options, he'll continue doing what he does.*

John McGann's Eclectic Acoustic

The Dark Island

I learned this beautiful Scottish waltz back in the eighties from both Russ Barenberg and the amazing fiddler Johnny Cunningham, who sadly died on December 15, 2003.

The recording is a solo guitar version, totally improvised, from a concert I played with Joe Derrane and Seamus Connolly. Rather than transcribe the version I played, which is very fluid and changes from performance to performance, I am presenting the basic chords and melody, so you can play the tune in it's basic setting, and then explore other possibilities if you so choose.

The concert was played as a pure acoustic show without a PA,which is my idea of heaven, but the recording sound quality is quiet ambient- I hope you'll enjoy it!

John McGann is a Boston based musician and member of The Wayfaring Strangers, Rust Farm, and has been playing traditional Irish music since 1980. His books include "Creating Melodic Variations on Fiddle Tunes for Guitar" available through Flatpicking Merchantile or from the author via www.johnmcgann.com, which has lots of information for flatpickers and other musicians.

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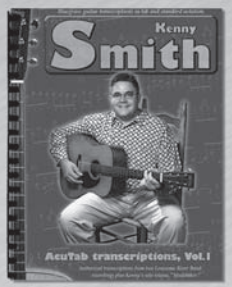

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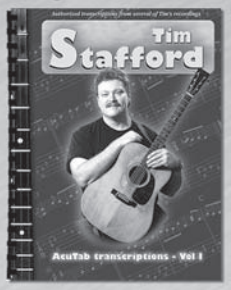

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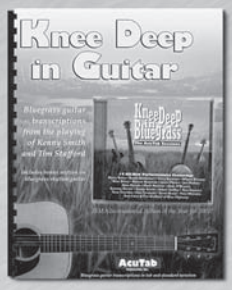

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The Dark Island

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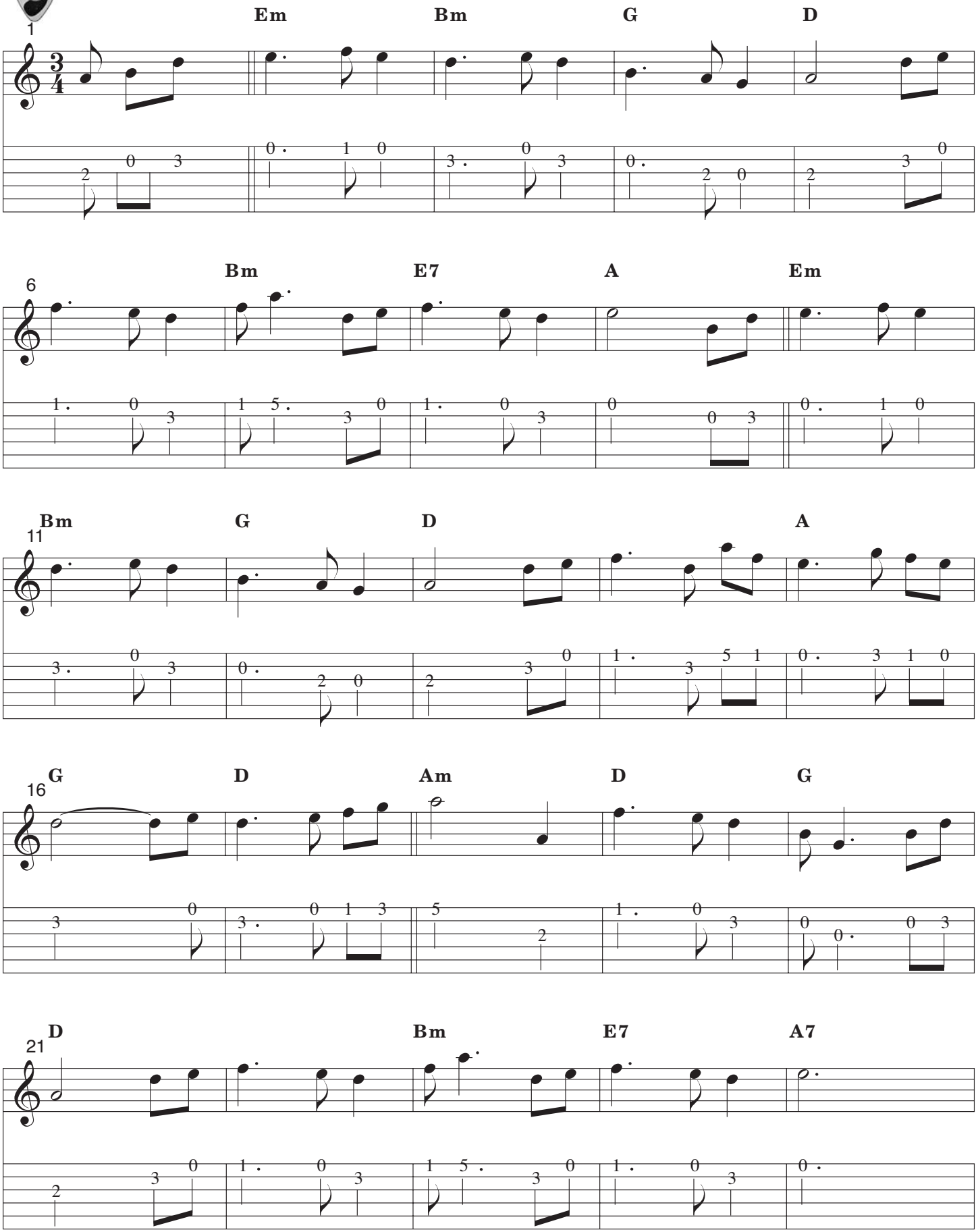
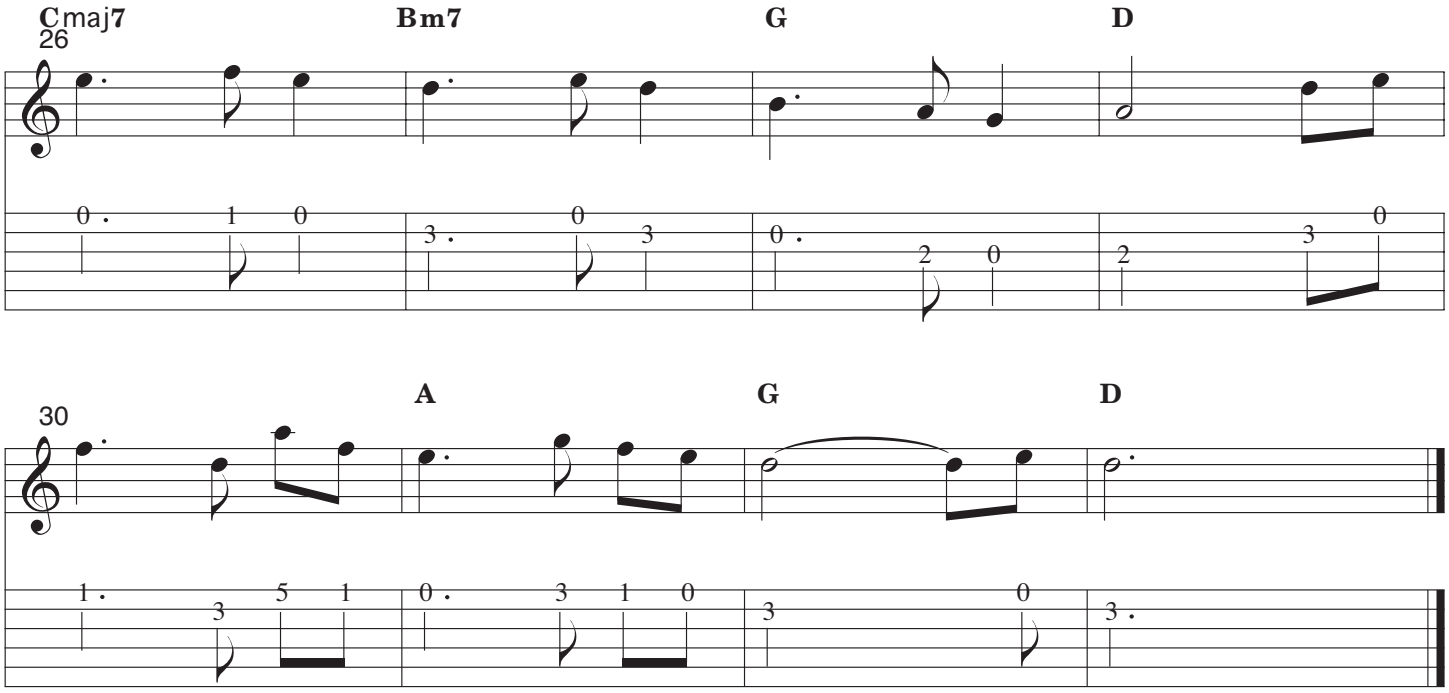

The Dark Island (con't)



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New Release Highlight
Robin Bullock: The Lightning Field

by Chris Thiessen

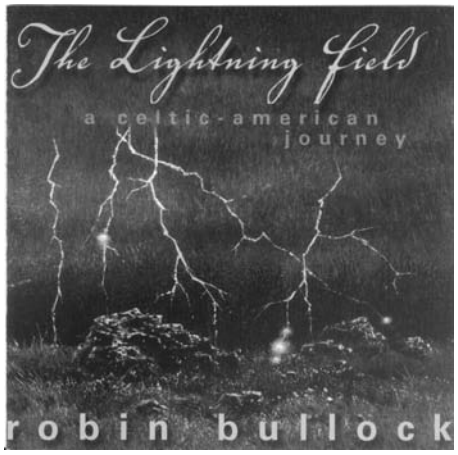
Robin Bullock: Expatriate Flatpicker

Moving to France—a nation not exactly known for either its bluegrass or Celtic guitar traditions—may not be the best career move for most folks. But for Robin Bullock, internationally renowned "Celtic guitar god" (as a Baltimore paper once labeled him), a touring-based trans-Atlantic lifestyle provides its own rewards and perspectives. Robin has lived in France since 2000, and any particular month will find him touring the US, Britain, Ireland, or other points east, west, north and south playing his music.

"I moved to France to be with my fiancée, and living in Europe is a great experience," Robin explains. "Anywhere I may be is just a short drive from another culture, another set of perspectives. And exposure to those differences helps me loosen the cultural ties that might prevent me from appreciating those differences. Look at the Krüger Brothers, who live in Switzerland. Yes, they play bluegrass, but it has just a slightly different spin. That's what exposure to different cultures does."

"Remember, I began playing Celtic, or more correctly, Irish music…" [Robin stops to explain that "Celtic" refers to a number of distinct but similar geographically focused ethnic musical styles, including Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Breton, and several others. While he can play in many of those styles, Robin's specialty is Irish music. So we used "Irish" throughout the rest of our conversation.] "…when I was living in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Because of the large numbers of Irish folks living there, as well as in New York and Boston and Philadelphia, I was able to meet, study, and just play with many incredibly talented native musicians. I had a great cultural immersion in that musical style while still living in the US."

Robin encountered Irish music after an intense period of learning bluegrass. "I was intense—too intense, some say—about learning bluegrass. And I applied the same focus to learning Irish music. But the two styles are entirely different, especially for guitar. Bluegrass focuses on an ensemble of



instruments, with each instrument providing a specific part. The guitar, especially, is a rhythm instrument most of the time. On the other hand, Irish music focuses on a single instrument—such as a fiddle, a flute, or a pipe—providing both a melody and rhythm line." [Robin laughs] "Irish music was first recorded back in the 20s, when fiddlers Michael Coleman and James Morrison played with piano accompaniment. The fiddling is great; the piano had absolutely no idea what to do. In fact, most traditional Irish musicians didn't like accompaniment of any sort. It wasn't until the 1960s, when two great Irish guitarists – Daithi Sproule and Micheal O Domhnaill – figured that a DADGAD tuning would work. Basically, DADGAD is modally indeterminate: since it doesn't have a third, it's neither a major or minor key, and becomes more of a drone accompaniment. And that drone accompaniment fits very well against the fiddle, flute, or whistle melody line. It emphasizes the unresolved mysteriousness of the music itself."

When asked about the irregular rhythmic structure of Irish music, Robin answers. "Part of texture of the music comes from its emotive content. As with Appalachian music, you've got folks living in isolated locations dreaming up tunes based on their emotions and perceptions. The melodies of Irish music do not always subscribe to the expected standards of Western harmony. And they're not supposed to. The challenge of an accompanist is to be sympathetic to the spirit of the music. Good accompaniment is almost transparent. I used to tell my students 'if you notice how good the accompaniment is, it's not that good.'"

Another challenge to the bluegrass-based guitarist is that the lead Irish instruments—fiddle, flute, or whistle—play in unison. "There's not a lot of harmony work, as there might be in bluegrass with mandolin and guitar and banjo," Robin explains. "Every melody instrument in Irish music plays the same tune. If you're flatpicking an Irish tune, more so than when you're playing accompaniment, you need to listen very carefully to what others are playing. Irish music is very non-ego. You serve the music, although there are more than enough intricacies to the music to satisfy the most technical guitarist."

Since moving to France, Robin has also cut back teaching individual students, although he may pick up some incidental day-students during his tours. "I enjoyed teaching while I was in the States, although teaching this music generates its own challenges," Robin says. "Using the DADGAD tuning, you're providing a drone accompaniment. Your D chord might be just the second string, third fret; your G chord might be just the fifth string, second fret; or your C chord might be the third fret on the fifth string. Any bass runs you might use involve changing a string or two against that drone. Remember that the rhythm and melody are one, played by a fiddle, for example. In Irish music, the 'rhythm' guitar is not really providing rhythm, but it can help to propel the music along. For example, in bluegrass, the rhythm guitar plays a steady repeating pattern that may occasionally vary. In Irish music, the melody and rhythm is bedrock-solid with the fiddle or flute. The guitar actually has greater freedom, and can move around and emphasize that rhythm. And even the specific chords the guitar plays are not set in stone. 'Cooley's Reel,' for example, alternates between an Em and D. But you can easily substitute a C chord (Em-D-C-D-Em). That's the benefit of the lead instrument providing both melody and rhythm."

"But," he continues, "you need to be very aware of the lift – the 'groove'—of the music. When Orrin Star talks about playing American fiddle tunes, he emphasizes that

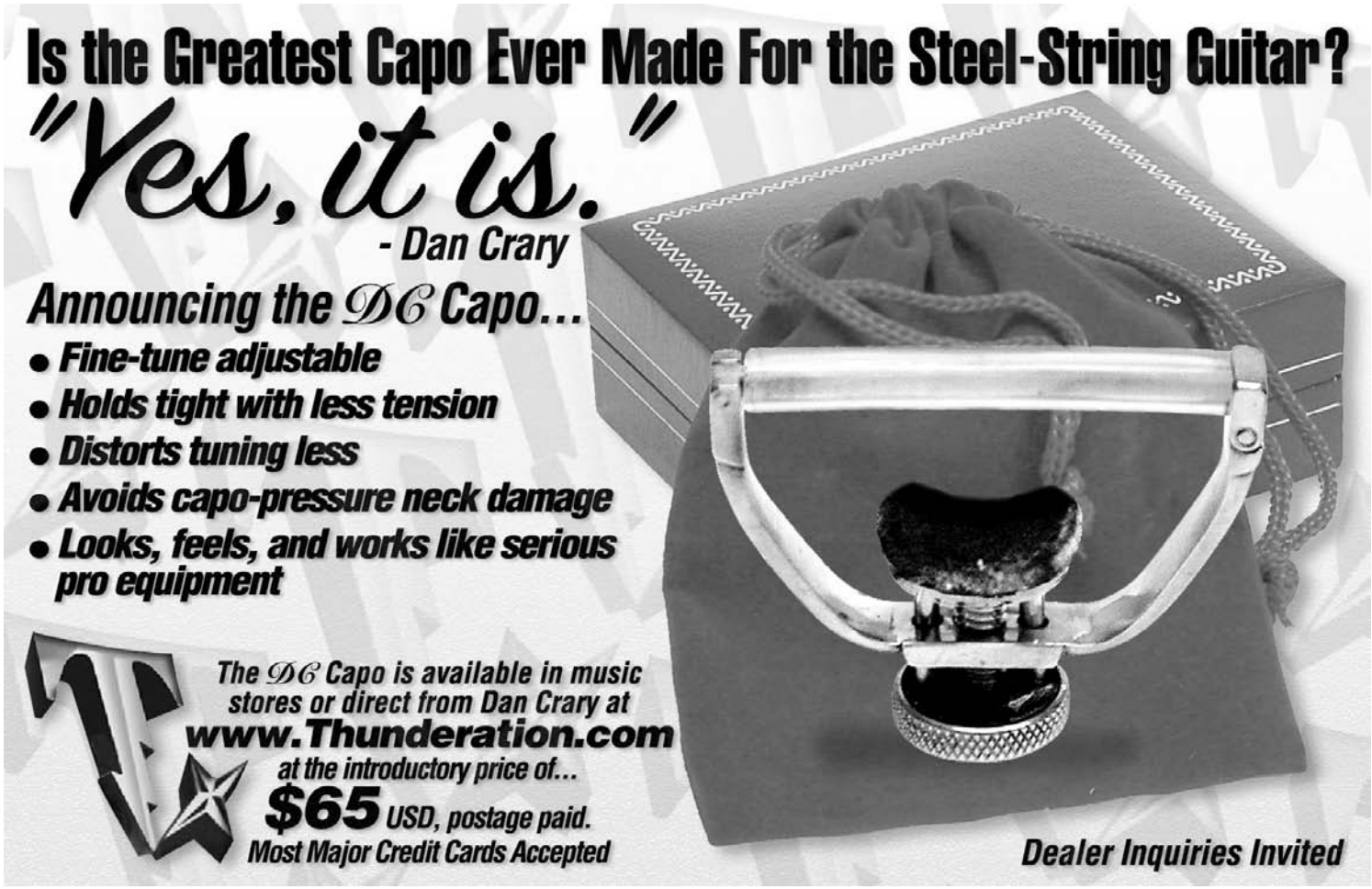
those tunes are primarily dance tunes. Same thing with Irish music: it is primarily music for dancing. Kevin Burke, an Irish fiddle player, often says 'it's all in the groove.' And the groove of the music doesn't have to be fast. Martin Hayes plays many tunes slowly, sometimes at almost half-speed, emphasizing the melody and control over the space between the notes."

Robin remains, however, a frequent teacher at many summer music camps over the continents (including Steve Kaufman's Flatpicking Kamp; World Voices, World Visions in Rhode Island; and the Swannanoa Gathering in North Carolina; as well as similar music camps in Europe). "Group sessions provide an entirely different teaching situation," he says. "Plus, being versed in both bluegrass and Celtic music makes me versatile. [He laughs.] If I'm at a Celtic gathering, I'm the bluegrass guru, and if I'm at a bluegrass camp, I'm the Celtic guy." In fact, Robin is planning his own Irish guitar weekend workshop in North Carolina's Outer Banks in late summer or early fall.

The tune that Robin has tabbed out for this issue comes from his CD *The Lightning Field*, which is slated for international release this spring. The tune "Rakish Paddy" is an Irish reel, with a sprinkling of triplet embellishments. "I prefer to call these 'rolls,'" says Robin. "They mimic a percussive effect, and are one way of propelling a tune along. If a melody stays on one note for a beat-and-a-half, it's considered melodically stagnant, so Irish players insert a roll on that note to push things along. The trick to a roll on a flatpicked instrument is not so much the triplet itself, but the recovery from it! The standard rule is that you always play a downstroke on the beat, but a triplet forces a D-U-D pattern where there's normally just D-U, and the next note, which is on the beat, has to be an upstroke instead of a downstroke just because there isn't time to correct it there. So you correct it by playing the very next note as an upstroke too, which sets you up for a downstroke on the next beat after that, and you're back to normal. You begin with D-U-D, but you recover with U-U. That creates a 'gallop' in the tune. Your full pattern is D-U-D, U-U, D-U-D-U, and I try to play the triplet as lightly as possible to create a percussive sound. But," Robin emphasizes, "once you have that pattern, you can't apply it mechanically (remember the dance!). You play with sympathy to the melody-rhythm line. If you immerse yourself in a lot of Irish music, you begin to get a feel for where to insert a roll."

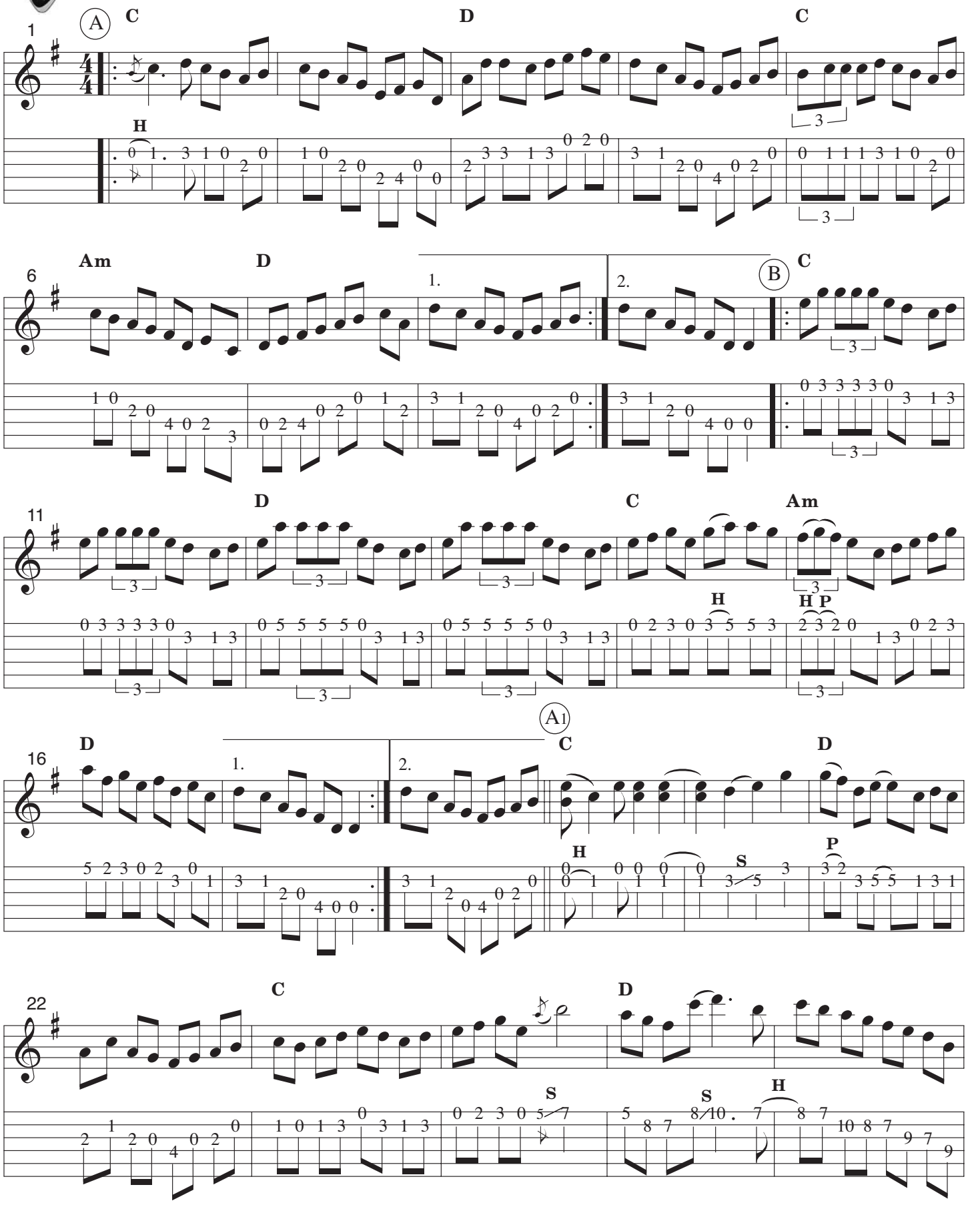
In summation, Robin cites the words of flute player John Skelton: "The groove is the most important; the melody is the second most important; and ornamentation is a distant third." And when asked whether being labeled an internationally recognized "Celtic guitar god" provides special powers, Robin laughs. "Unfortunately, no. I had hoped my guitar strings might last longer, but that's not the case. I just practice like everyone else."

For the latest biographical information on Robin, his CDs, or his US or international tours (as a solo act, with flutist Michael Sikiotakis, or with fingerstyle guitarist Steve Baughman), check out his website (www.robinbullock.com).



Audio CD
Track 44

Rakish Paddy

Arranged by Robin Bullock

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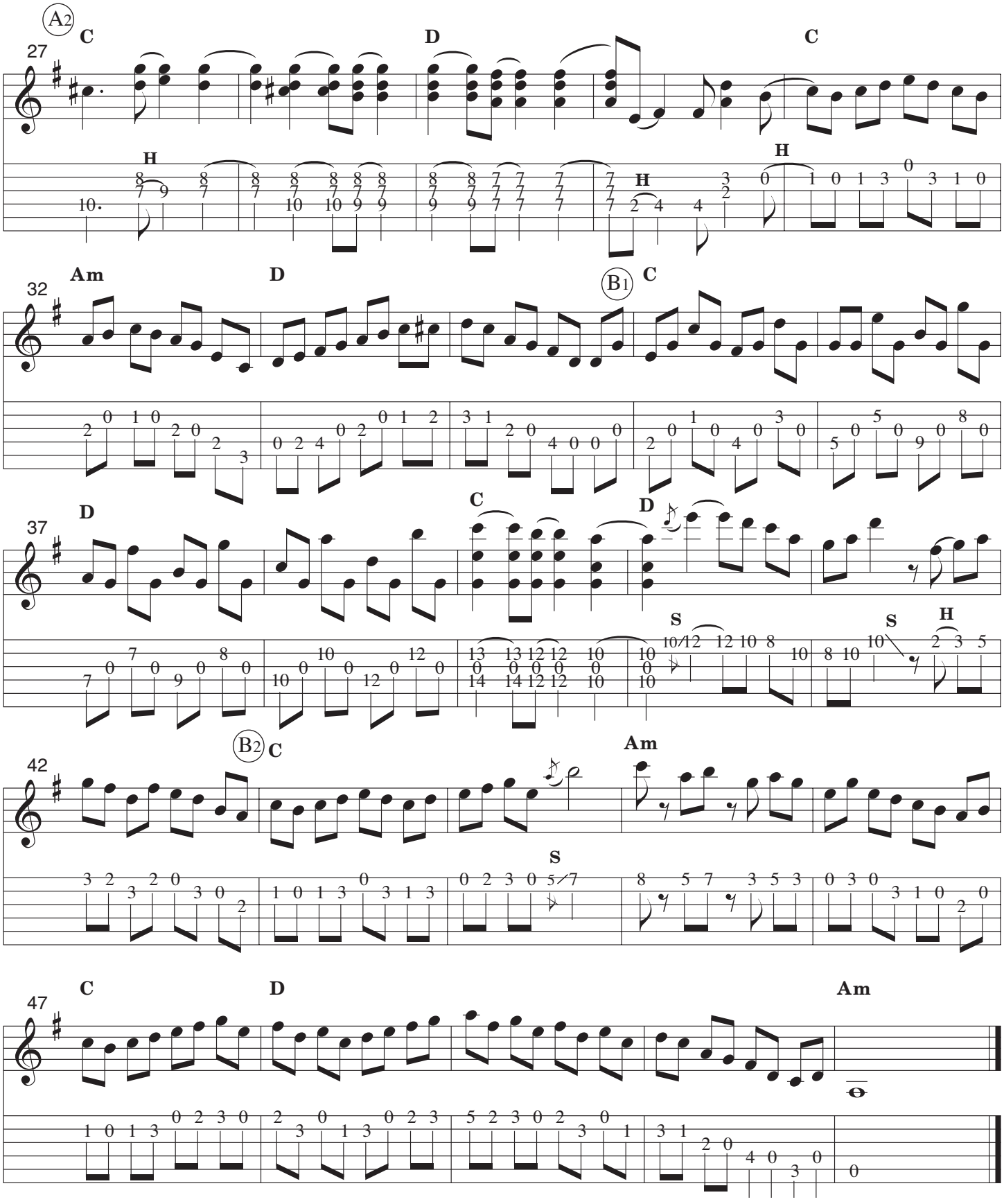
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Reviews

House Down the Block
Kenny & Amanda Smith Band
Rebel Records

Reviewed by Chris Thiessen

A couple of years ago I heard an early incarnation of the Kenny & Amanda Smith Band [K&ASB] play live at a very small festival near Christiansburg, VA. They took the typical ad hoc small festival "stage" (two semi-flatbeds parked side-by-side) and played for about 45 minutes. Although all members were seasoned professionals, they were still finding their collective "voice" as a band. *House Down the Block*, the long-awaited debut CD for the Kenny & Amanda Smith Band, conclusively demonstrates they've now resolved that problem! For extra credibility, K&ASB have been tapped as IBMA's Emerging Artist of the Year for 2003.

If you've been listening to bluegrass for a while, there's no need to recite the musical pedigrees of the individual band members. But this combination—Steve Huber (banjo), Ron Inscore (mandolin), Greg Martin (bass), and Kenny (lead & rhythm guitar and vocals) and Amanda (rhythm guitar and vocals) Smith—has tightened into a cohesive unit that produces phenomenal music.

Take the CD's first cut, "Where Love Went Wrong." The intro is a simple mandolin riff over a strong rhythm guitar. Once Amanda starts singing, the mandolin reverts to a light backbeat chop for the first eight measures, after which the bass and banjo join in. Nothing is overemphasized: everything melds together in a coherent functional sound with well-balanced vocals. This song's greatest instrumental delight (a foreshadowing of things to come) occurs in the last 30 seconds of the tune, as the guitar, then banjo, then mandolin play the tune's signature riff. It's an immensely catchy phrase that I found myself humming long after the CD had ended.

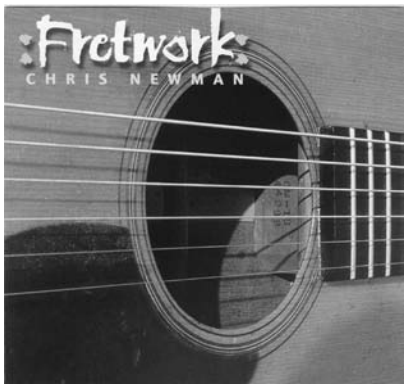
The second tune, "I Know Where Love Lives," starts at full run. Amanda's voice glides over the frenzied instrumental, her song's lyrics an odd but harmonious contrapuntal pace to the tune's speed. Kenny's solo (:49-:56) is followed by Ron's solo (:56-1:11), both of which are subtly reinforced by Greg's bass and Steve's banjo. And just as quickly as it began, the song ends: a very fast 2 minutes!

Through all 13 cuts (almost 37 minutes' worth of music) the quality of music is the same. Expect excellent solos from every instrument, but listen carefully for short bits of absolutely superb musicianship. For example, Kenny's solo in "It's Not the Wind" is great, but listen carefully to how he underlays Amanda's vocals in the same song (3:00-3:09). Or the playful note-for-note sequence (1:22-1:31) in "Big Ball in Boston." That, I believe, is the great emerging strength and immense potential of this band: the ability to balance broad strokes of musicianship (as in solos) with an exacting attention to fundamental details. Anyone can start with a diamond, but only master cutters can facet the stone correctly.

And I cannot resist a sidebar on Steve Huber's banjo (even though this is a guitar magazine): it sounds remarkable, with just the right amount of vintage "cut." Listen to his openings on "I've Traveled Down This Lonesome Road Before" or "Stay a Little Longer" or "Big Ball in Boston" (which quickly becomes bluegrass in hyperdrive) or his back-up work on any tune.

Song List: Where Love Went Wrong; I Know Where Love Lives; The Girl Next Door; Without a Trace; It's Not the Wind; All She Ever Wants; I've Traveled Down This Lonesome Road Before; Song for Emily; Why Don't You Just Say Goodbye; Stay A Little Longer; House Down the Block; Never Win Again; Big Ball in Boston

Fretwork:
Chris Newman
Old Bridge Music



Reviewed by Chris Thiessen

Multi-instrumentalist Chris Newman (interviewed elsewhere in this issue) released Fretwork, his third solo CD, in 1998. It represented a collection of work over the 15 years since his last solo CD in 1983. For *Fretwork*, Newman presents primarily original tunes (14 of the 17 cuts) that cut across an amazing range of sheer musical ability. The CD opens with the jazzy "Pass the Pick," which is followed by "Down the Wind," which conclusively testifies to the rich tone Newman pulls out of his 1930 OM-18. En route to the Caribbean-esque title cut, "Fretwork," he provides the pastoral fingerstyled "The Riverside," which includes violin accompaniment by Nollaig Casey. From the Caribbean he then jumps to a Swedish fiddle tune (or polska), "Höök Olle Storpolska."

And that's just the first five tunes! After mixing in the talents of fiddler Casey and Irish harpist/pianist/whistle player Máire Ni Chathasaigh, the breadth of Newman's musical skill deftly evades quick categorizations (other than "master acoustic musician"). Compare the heavily ornamented Irish medley "Tom McConville's Idea/Arthur's Rover/The Black Cat Reel" to his simple-and-pure execution of "Tell Her Lies and Feed Her Candy/Old Joe Clark." Newman's facility in perfectly expressing himself in whatever cultural venue he chooses makes each cut on this CD an experience in itself. "The Astronomer's Gaze" or "The Mallard's Minuet" evoke the Renaissance; "The Last Call" is an unreleased tune he wrote while a

member of the Boys of the Lough. It's Irish, yes, but something more. And "something more" might just be the best characterization of all of Newman's work.

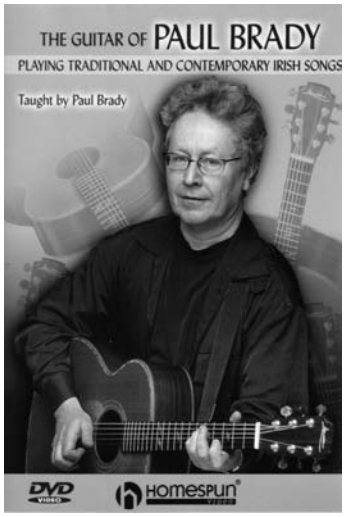
This CD also contains the flatpicking tour-de-force piece for which Newman has become justly famous: a trio of tunes written by Scottish fiddler James Scott Skinner, including "The Mathematician" (transcribed in this issue of FGM). There's a flatpicking project to occupy several months!

Finally, don't think for a minute that Chris Newman has been sitting on his laurels since 1998. He's been touring internationally with Irish harpist Máire Ni Chathasaigh, and they've released several CDs, the most recent being *Dialogues* on the Old Bridge Music label (www.oldbridgemusic.com). So if you dare, let that music expand your musical mind even more!

Song List: Pass The Pick; Down the Wind; The Riverside; Fretwork; Höök Olle Storpolska; The Arctic Goose; The Albatross Waltz; Tom McConville's Idea/Arthur's Rover/The Black Cat Reel; The Astronomer's Gaze; Where's the Bar?; The Mallard's Minuet; Off The Hook/The Last Resort; Water on the Moon; Tell Her Lies and Feed Her Candy/Old Joe Clark; The Skinner Set (The Mathematician/The Spey in Spate's/AA Gladstone); Dance of Dawn; The Last Call

DVD Review

The Guitar of Paul Brady Playing Traditional and Contemporary Irish Songs
Homespun Tapes



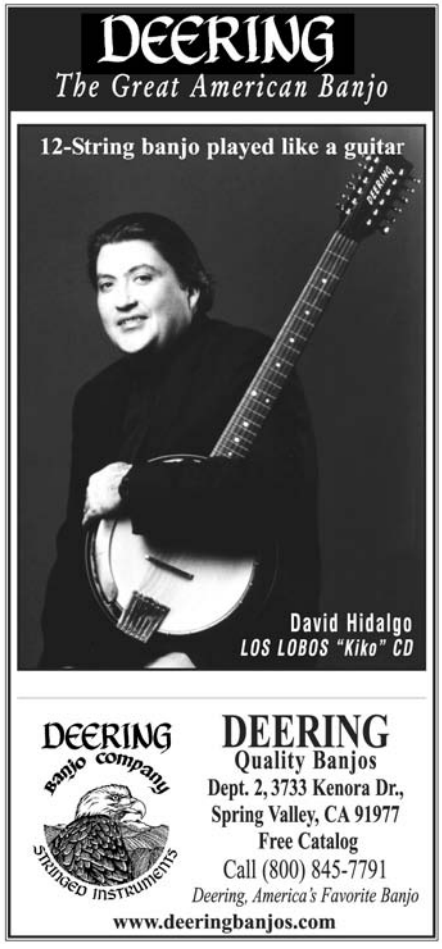
Reviewed by Dan Miller

If you have read our feature articles in this issue, you will know that Paul Brady has had a tremendous influence on guitar players in Ireland and Scotland as he was one of the first professional Irish musicians to incorporate the acoustic guitar in traditional Irish music. Paul grew up in Ireland and after being influenced by American folk singers in the sixties he began to accompany his singing of traditional Irish tunes, as well as his own original material, on the guitar. His powerful voice, captivating guitar accompaniment, and strong songwriting ability have all served to build a large fanbase the world over.

In this new DVD by Homespun tapes, Paul, with host Happy Traum, presents his guitar style. Primarily the discussion revolves around his rhythm style on his original material as well as a few traditional Irish tunes. What you will get here that is different from any of the other instructional material that you may already own is Paul's use of various alternate and open tunings (and their respective chord shapes); his extensive use of bare fingers in combination with his flatpick when playing rhythm and lead; and his use of drone strings and muted notes. Although this is primarily an accompaniment presentation, Paul also demonstrates the intros and short solo guitar breaks that he uses to open his tunes and tie various versus and choruses together.

If you are a singer who plays as a solo performer accompanying yourself with the acoustic guitar this DVD offers a wonderful assortment of guitar techniques that can serve to greatly increase your ability to add various textures and embellishments to your performance and presentation. Although Paul is known as an Irish performer, his style is a synthesis of American singer-songwriter and Irish traditional music. Paul talks about his background and the origin of his unique style at the beginning of the DVD and also speaks of his vocal style, which is a mix of traditional ornamentation and contemporary improvisations. If you sing and play the guitar, you will definitely find this DVD worth your time and investment.

The DVD is accompanied by a tab booklet which provides transcriptions of Paul's intros and accompaniment. Additionally, words are provided. Paul's original tunes have been recorded by such notable artists as Bonnie Raitt, Tina Turner, David Crosby, Phil Collins, Cher, and Carlos Santata. If you are unfamiliar with his songs and guitar style you may find some great new material for your repertoire here on this new DVD.



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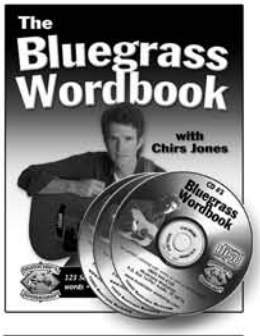

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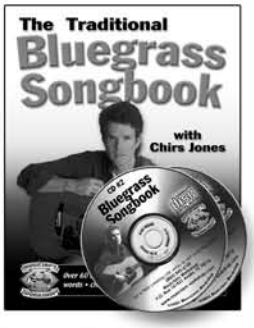

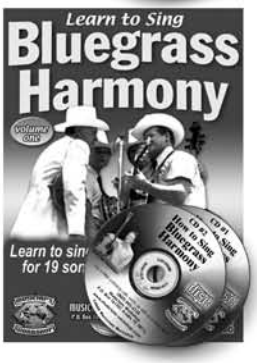

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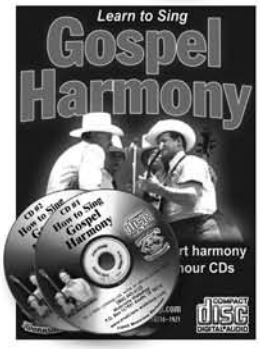

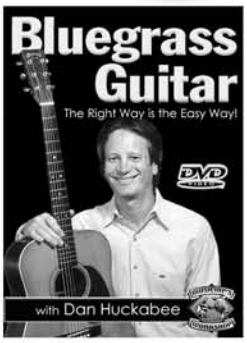

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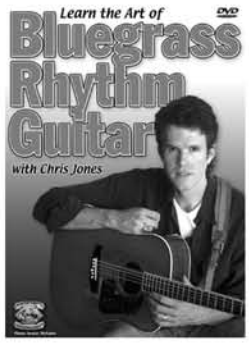

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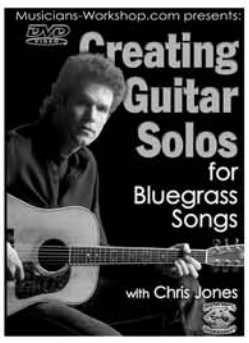

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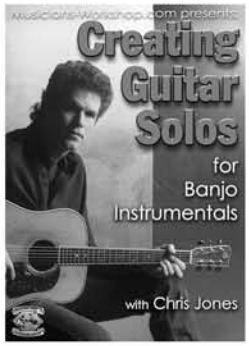

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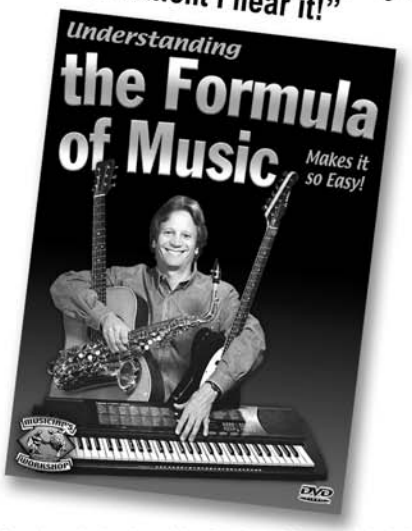

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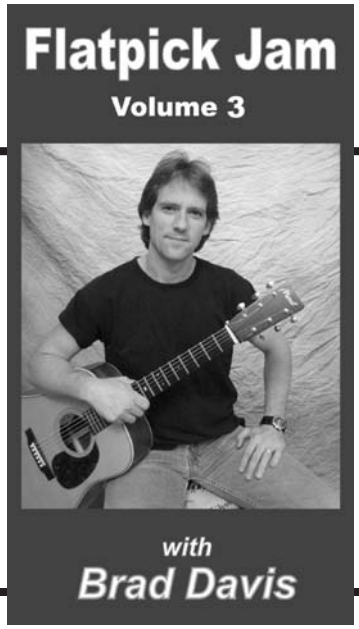

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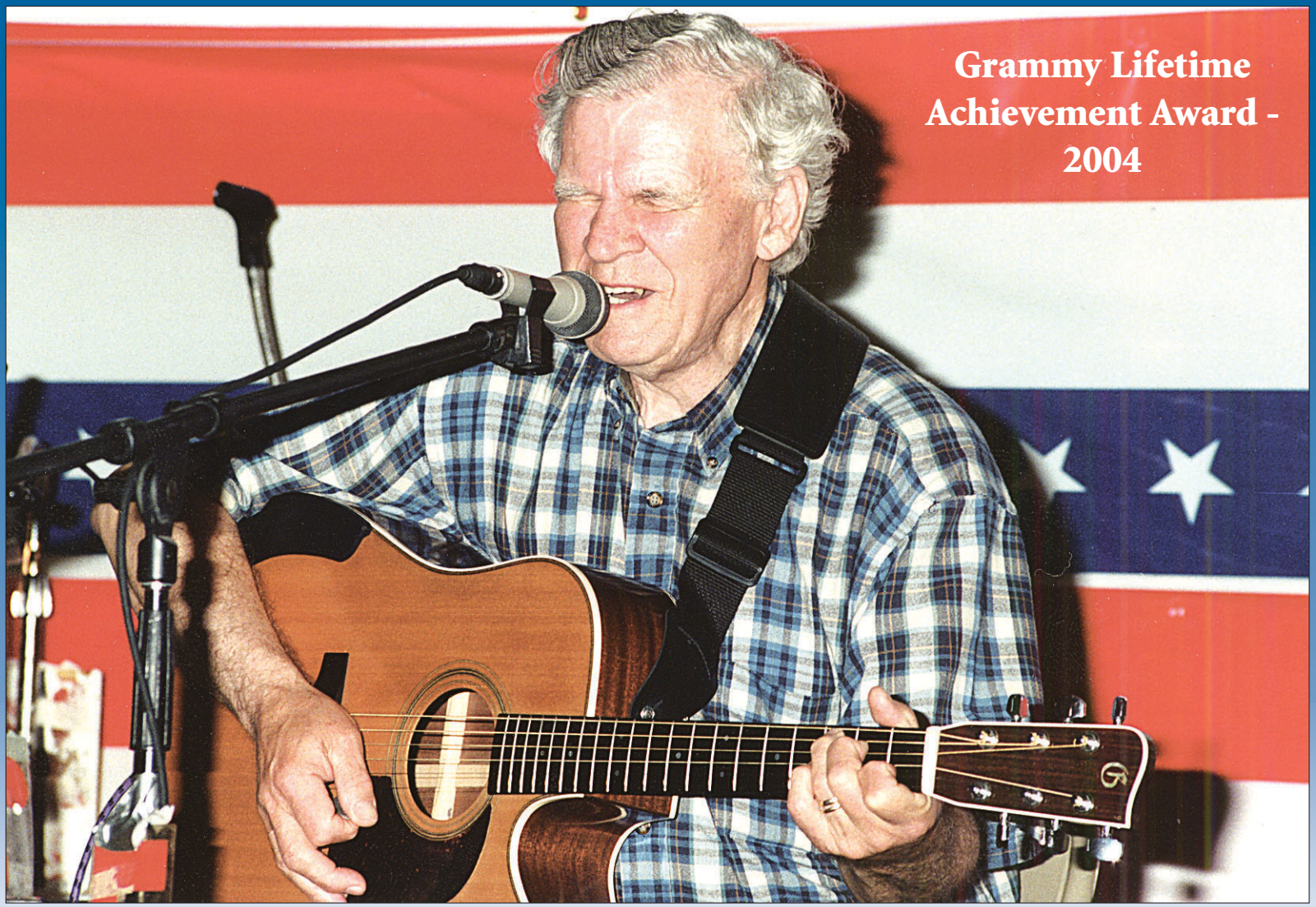

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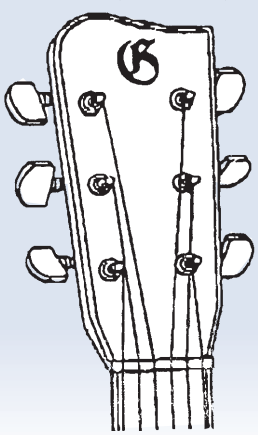
Thanks Doc, for setting the bar high, for makers of guitars, players of music, and for listeners who, having heard you perform, know they have experienced the very best.

Yours has truly been a lifetime of achievement. You are tightly woven into the fabric of American music and we salute you and wish for you many more years of mastery and achievement.



Gallagher Guitars

P. O. Box 128
Wartrace, TN 37183
Ph./Fax: 931-389-6455
www.gallagherguitar.com

Sincerely,

Don

Don Gallagher

MOTHER, MOTHER OCEAN

I HAVE HEARD YOU CALL

WANTED TO SAIL UPON YOUR WATERS

SINCE I WAS THREE FEET TALL

– written on a model D-18 about a friend and local pirate from Key West, 1974

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